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# SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 588. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 7TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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# SHORT STORIES

No. 588.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending April 7th, 1900.

## THE TALE OF A BIRTHDAY NUMBER.

EVERYBODY knew Sir Joseph Plumpton, and everybody—in Rosetta Avenue at all events—knew Horace Plumpton, his son and heir. But as to there being any connection between the two, *that*, to the public mind, was an impossibility.

Sir Joseph was the great pickle manufacturer; Horace was "the lodger at No. 17," familiarly known as "the literary gent."

Pickles had made Plumpton *père*; the same piquant additions to the table, (*vide* advertisement) had been, so the young man declared vehemently, the ruin of his son. For Horace was, or rather had inspirations in the direction of, a poet, and when did poetry and pickles go together?

Plumpton senior, at all events, decided that the two could never run in double harness. He gave his son the choice, and finding that the perverse young man refused to give up scribbling sent him from the paternal roof and crossed him, if not out of his will, at any rate out of the business.

And so Mrs. Reed of 17, Rosetta Avenue, gained the lodger, which she wanted badly, her neighbours in that charming suburban retreat gained a fresh subject of conversation, also badly in request, and the editors of various journals gained a new contributor, which they didn't want at all.

Poor Horace was, no doubt, having a very bad time of it. His *forte*, in his own estimation, lay in the direction of epic poems, and judging by the number of returned MSS., "the heroic" was a drug in the market; he then tried his hand at stories of the bush, African life and so forth.

As he had never been out of England these most certainly should have been a success, and there is no accounting for the piece of advice given to him by a long-suffering editor to the effect that "he'd do better, if he wrote about what he knew."

"And that," thought Horace, "would mean pickles."

So terribly discouraged grew this aspirant for literary distinction that he might have thrown up the sponge, or rather the pen, and returned to his father, had it not been for the advent of Miss Molly Earnshaw, who somehow or other had exercised a strong influence on his destiny.

Miss Molly was a typist, a brown-eyed, brown-haired girl with the sweetest voice and the cheeriest smile imaginable. Her introduction to Horace was informal to a degree, and came about through the agency of the maid of all work at No. 17.

Molly occupied "the parlours" at Mrs. Reed's and, therefore, was brought but little in contact with the other lodgers. In fact, she did not know one from the rest, and, save for a hurried "good morning" in the passage, never exchanged a word with them.

And, had it not been for "Jane," this state of things might have continued till the end of the chapter.

Now "Jane" was above everything else a tender-hearted damsel. Lodgers might come and lodgers might go, but number and variety never exhausted her well spring of human sympathy; her tears were ever ready to flow at tales of "altered circumstances," "delayed remittances," etc., and her belief in the ultimate arrival of the latter was not to be shaken by innumerable disappointments.

And thus it was that Molly, descending to the lower regions in quest of her breakfast, some half hour late, found the domestic plunged in grief, and giving noisy demonstrations of the same, over nothing less than Horace Plumpton's boots!

"It cut me to the heart, it do, miss," said the girl, sniffing vigorously, "for the pore young gentleman to catch his death of cold. This," holding the boot out with an expression of contempt, "is nothing but brown paper, the other's no better."

Molly listened sympathetically, but suggested that she was already late and would like breakfast, and, the better to forward Jane's preparations for the same, volunteered to carry the boots to the top floor front where Horace was domiciled. And of all mornings Horace, usually the latest of risers, selected this one to be up and dressed and waiting on the landing for his boots.

Over the banisters he caught sight of Miss Molly's pretty head with its weight of chestnut hair, could distinguish the numbers of curls and twists with which it was decorated, and fell to wondering however she got them to stay up. His cogitations were abruptly ended, however, by the sight of a pair of boots daintily carried in her small white hands.

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Horrors! they were his boots, his worst boots—and he had secretly admired Miss Molly for months!

"Poor fellow," she said softly, "they are bad, I am very sorry for him."

After that there was nothing left for him to do but to come forward as gracefully as he could, relieve her of the boots and try to look unconscious of their dilapidated condition.

"Er—Thank you," he said, "it's very warm this morning, is it not?" which was hardly an original nor even an inspiring remark from a poet.

Miss Molly smiled, thereby showing as white a set of teeth as anyone—saving a dentist—could wish to see. Somehow the memory of that smile haunted poor Horace for the rest of the day. It certainly hindered the progress of his work, but, all things considered, that didn't matter very much, he thought disconsolately, for his MSS. were like the famous cat, they invariably "came back."

It was about six weeks after their first meeting that Horace and Molly had tea together, in the latter's little sitting-room.

Etiquette as understood in Mayfair was not practised in Rosetta Avenue, and therefore conventionality was not outraged by Molly's issuing the invitation, nor by Horace's acceptance of the same. The young fellow had grown thinner, it seemed to Molly, and she and Jane had had several confidential talks relative to his altered appearance.

It was a pouring wet afternoon and something about him, his dejected air, and hopeless expression induced the girl when they encountered on the doorstep to ask him in.

They were his boots, his worst boots.

"It's such a wretched day," she said, "and there's nothing like a good cup of tea as a remedy for the weather. Mrs. Reed, as I know too well, invariably sends one up a weak decoction flavoured with smoke. Suppose you try my brew, instead?"

She found him a great deal more interesting than she expected. Under the thawing influences of a dainty meal, a bright fire and Miss Molly's smile, Horace forgot his self-consciousness, and his shabbiness into the bargain, and talked and laughed almost as much as his hostess.

"I wonder," she said, after a pause, "you have the courage to go on writing after so much ill-luck; why don't you turn your attention to something else for a bit?"

"That's all very well," he answered with a sigh, "and I might consider the proposition if I had any alternative but the one fate, or rather my father, offers me. Poetry," with a wan smile, "you must agree, is preferable to pickles."

She glanced at him a trifle apprehensively. Surely he must suffer from delusions.

"You must know my father," he went on desperately, "everybody does, unfortunately, Sir Joseph Plumpton is ——"

"The manufacturer, of course, how stupid of me. But, if you are his son,. why on earth—" She faltered, conscious that she was treading on dangerous ground.

"You mean how do I come to be in this low water?" he asked pleasantly. "Well, that's a long story, Miss Earnshaw. My father is determined that I should throw all my energies into the business. I, on my part, have made up my mind to devote myself to literature. Neither of us can see the way to alter our minds."

"Surely a compromise," faltered Molly, divided between astonishment that the fair-haired young fellow before her should have so much "grit" in him, and surprise that Sir Joseph should be so obstinate.

"I'm afraid not," answered Horace, "we're both of us rather obstinate and a little hot-tempered. Sooner or later, you know I'm bound to succeed. Perseverance must tell in the long run."

Somewhat encouraged by her sympathy, Horace took to reading her his poems, articles and stories, and, sure proof of his regard, did not even feel offended when she advised that all the "epics" should be burnt, and persuaded him to rely in future, upon fiction.

Wonderful to relate, he followed her suggestion, consigned his "masterpieces" to the flames and turned his attention to short stories.

A measure of success rewarded his efforts and it was, therefore, in great good humour that he ran in one Saturday to Molly Earnshaw with a letter from his father in his hand.

"Look!" he exclaimed, "what do you think of this?"

The letter was, in effect, a tendering of the olive branch. Sir Joseph gave it as his opinion that his son had "played the fool" long enough. If, however, he was still taken up with his scribbling, he, Sir Joseph, was ready to consent to his entering on that line of life for good and all; but only on conditions.

"If," he wrote, "at the end of the year you can prove that you have earned by your writings, say £200, I'm ready to waive the question of your entering the business and will make you a suitable allowance, but, should you

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fall short of that sum, you on your side must undertake to give up all ideas of authorship and enter the factory at once."

"Well," said Molly, sharply, "shall you accept?"

"Provided my father agrees to a certain stipulation."

"What is that?" asked Molly, fidgeting with the blind cord.

Horace came a little closer.

"That in any case he will welcome my future wife."

"I didn't know you were engaged," said Molly, flippantly, "what is her name?"

The young fellow glanced quickly at her face. Apparently what he read therein satisfied him, for, with a quiet smile, he drew her, unresisting, to him.

"Her name is Molly, dear," he answered, "and she's the sweetest little woman in the world."

"All the same," said she, some moments later, "you never asked me."

"For shame, Molly," laughed her lover, "why, you kissed me!"

And so Sir Joseph's conditions were accepted, he on his side agreeing to his son's. Furthermore, he sent a handsome cheque for "every-day expenses" as he termed it.

"And now, my darling, I've nothing left to do but write stories," said Horace, gleefully.

Molly, a trifle more experienced, replied. "And get them accepted, dear."

"Oh! that of course," said Horace.

* * * * *

It was just about this time that a change occurred in the fortunes of Molly Earnshaw.

She was offered a position as typist in the office of a weekly journal, a chance that she eagerly took advantage of, and which enabled her to be of some slight assistance to Horace.

That young man had made a fair amount of progress since Sir Joseph's letter, but although encouraging, it was hardly conclusive.

Nine months had elapsed since he left home, in another three the year ordained by his father as his limit of probation, would expire, and, sad to relate, his literary earnings during that time hardly amounted to £30.

Unless some extraordinary stroke of luck intervened, he would be compelled to resign himself to a future utterly repellant, loathsome even, and bid farewell for ever to the hopes, bright though elusive, which had cheered him through the darkest days of despondency of doubt and weakness.

Another trouble was added to those already overburdening him, and this time it came from the girl who, hitherto, had always been the one to assure, comfort and console him.

"Horace," she said one day, "I have been thinking things over, and if all does not turn out as we wish, I mean, supposing you can't fulfil Sir Joseph's condition, it will be better for us to break off our engagement."

The young man stood aghast.

What had come to her, what was she thinking of? the cruelty, the hard-heartedness of such a proposition!

"Not at all," said Molly firmly, "'tis only common sense. You told me yourself that your father had set his mind on your marrying his partner's daughter, and that he was very disappointed when he heard you were already engaged."

"Her name is Molly."

"Well, and what has that to do with me?"

"Just this, that if you please him in one thing he may come round in another. Marry the woman he wishes to be your wife, and, I expect, he won't press the matter of your going into the business."

"And you propose that I should gain my own ends by deliberately sacrificing you. Why Molly, I thought you *cared* for me?"

"Well, and what greater proof could you want than that I am ready to sacrifice everything for you?"

"That's just where you women make a mistake," said Horace, "nine times out of ten a man does not want sacrifice but affection. He requires loving human sympathy, and you offer him the cold shoulder of duty. Come, my darling, say that you won't dream of anything so foolish or unkind."

But the utmost that Molly could be induced to promise was that she would not again mention his marrying Katie Seymour. Further than that she would not go.

Some few days after, Sir Joseph himself appeared upon the scene, attired in all the splendour that modern dress will allow even a millionaire. Personally, Sir Joseph would have preferred to walk out in a red plush robe of aldermanic proportions, preceded by a mace bearer or a pair of pages at the least. As it was, his huge diamond pin and studs, his multi-coloured tie and extensive waistcoat struck due awe in the breasts of the small boys down Rosetta Avenue, and caused quite a large number

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Sir Joseph appeared on the scene, attired in all the splendour that modern dress will allow.

of well-meaning women to leave their work and congregate at their front parlour windows.

Sir Joseph expressed himself pleased at his son's accommodation, being secretly gratified at the landlady's ill-disguised admiration. He chuckled somewhat offensively on learning the large sum still required to make up the £200 required as proof of Horace's literary capacity, and prophesied that before long he would forget all "that nonsense," with a sweep in the direction of the "copy" his son was turning out, and become enamoured of pickles.

"Tell you what it is, though," said he, after a while, "I don't mind going a bit further than my word, if you'll be reasonable. You shall continue this scribbling business and welcome, if you'll throw over this typewriter girl and marry Katie Seymour. She's a good girl, a pretty girl, and what is more, heiress to £20,000. Come, Horace what do you say?"

But as to that there could be but one reply.

Never, never, never, would he give up his sweetheart! until Sir Joseph lost his temper and retired precipitately.

Horace did not, however, communicate the substance of the interview with his father to Molly, and took comfort from the fact that she did not again refer to the vexed question of Miss Seymour.

Moreover she had a piece of good news for him. The paper on which she was employed, to commemorate their birthday number, had offered a prize of £150 for the best story sent in.

Horace's hopes ran high at the prospect.

The £30 had crept up to forty, there was a certainty of his earning another ten, and if he could be sure of the prize, that would make a grand total of £200, and Molly, his darling Molly, would be his, and he should be for ever released from the prospect of the business which he so detested.

Many and anxious were the conversations that they had as to plot, construction, and characters for the all-important tale.

Molly worried herself quite ill over the selection of a title, and Horace declared that the whole thing aged him by years.

When at last the manuscript was despatched they both felt relieved of an immense weight, and went to the theatre by way of celebrating the auspicious occasion.

"We'll go abroad when we're married, Molly," he said, "for a year at least. Just think how splendid it will be to see all the places one has dreamt of, longed for, with the woman one cares for most in the world."

And Molly, for once throwing aside her forebodings, assisted in building castles in the air, and peopled them with as light a heart as Horace himself.

"I think," she said, as they wished each other "Good-night," "that if your story is chosen for the prize, I shall feel inclined to embrace everybody in the building, from the editor down to the office boy."

"In that case I would be inclined to wish for failure—if I were jealous."

"And aren't you?"

"Not a little bit, not even as much as you are of Miss Seymour."

"As if I cared for *her*. Why she has red hair. You don't think her pretty, do you Horace?"

But Horace declined to say, murmuring that it was not good for certain people to be flattered, and that "red" was by no means a bad colour.

"Very good indeed, as far as flannel is concerned," retorted Molly, with which parthean shot she closed the conversation, and the door—the latter with somewhat unnecessary violence.

The weeks passed but slowly, dragging into months in that leaden footed fashion so hard for youth, hot and impetuous, to bear.

"I wish it were over," sighed Horace, twenty times a day, whilst Molly sincerely echoed the wish.

"This competition will do us a lot of good," observed the editor of *Questions* one morning. "The circulation has gone up immensely within the last month, and I expect we shall double it very soon."

Molly listened with her heart in her mouth.

Matters rarely brought her into contact with the editorial department, but, of late, she had made a hundred and one excuses for the purpose of trying to glean some information as to whom the lucky winner of the prize might be.

The competitors had sent in their stories under assumed names, but poor Molly listened vainly for any mention of "Hugh Sinclair"—her lover's *nom de plume*.

The suspense was telling on the girl, and no one would have recognised in her the bright-faced maiden of a month ago.

And then, one morning, she awoke to the consciousness that on that day her fate, and her lover's, would be sealed, for on that afternoon the birthday number went to press.

It was impossible to settle or work. Somehow or other she must find out who had won the prize. Her heart was thumping painfully, and her hands trembled in spite of all her self-control as she passed into the editor's room.

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The great man was at his table and apparently immersed in manuscripts.

"It's hard to choose between the two," he was saying as she entered, "this one," throwing a MS on the table which Mollie recognised with a contraction of the heart. "is every bit as good as the other. And yet I'm half inclined to give the preference to the one you have."

"There's certainly very little difference, but I agree with you, that, if anything, the one I've just read is the better."

Molly's heart stood still for a moment.

The editor paused, then reaching out his hand, took the story from the other.

"That's settled," he said, with a sigh of relief, and placed the two MSS. side by side.

And the one that was *not* to have the prize was signed "Hugh Sinclair."

Mollie waited for a moment, her brain in a whirl, a lump in her throat that somehow she could not swallow.

Then with a desperate effort she approached the table.

The other man had left and she and the editor were alone.

Still trembling she laid hold of the precious MS.

"I think you said this was nearly, if not quite, as good as the other," she faltered.

"Yes."

"Well then," said Mollie, faintly. "I think I should give it the prize."

"Really," was the amused answer, "and for what reason?"

Mollie glanced round fearfully, then, with a last effort, gasped:

"He's the son of Sir Joseph Plumpton, and"—grasping the handle of the door, preparatory to flight—"*our advertisements are getting rather low.*"

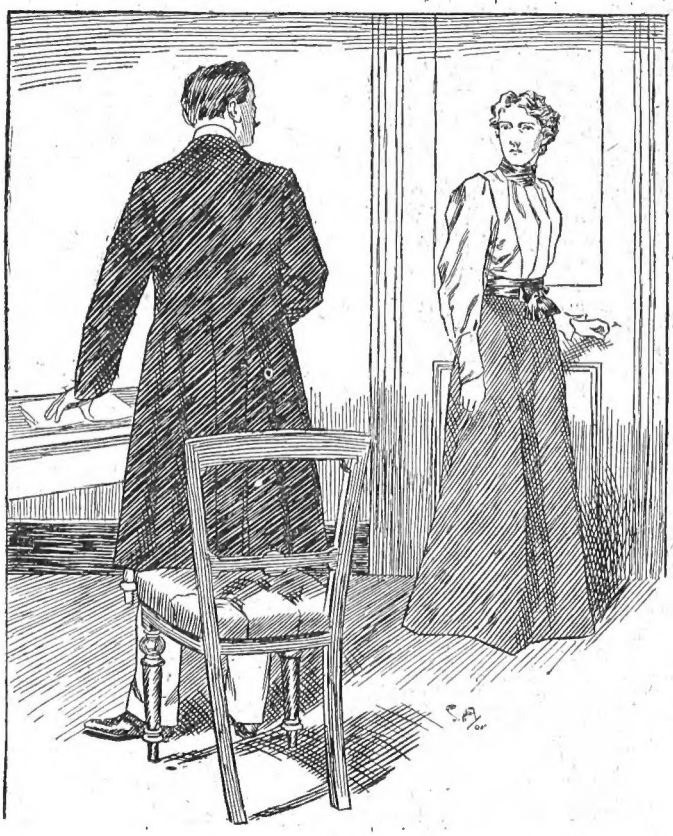
* * * * *

The issue of *Questions Birthday Number* was in many respects an important one.

To begin with it brought about the marriage of Horace Plumpton and his sweetheart Mollie, inasmuch as that fortunate young man gained the £150 prize and thereby fulfilled his father's stipulation that he should show proof that he could earn bread and cheese, at all events, with his pen.

Secondly, it increased the circulation of that very remarkable paper in a marvellous manner which, doubtless, was the cause of Sir Joseph Plumpton spending some thousands of pounds in its advertisement columns.

As for Molly, being of an unusually tender conscience, she went about for a week or two consumed with remorse at the supposed sufferings of the other competitor, whose story had been as good, if not better, than her lover's.



"He's the son of Sir Joseph Plumpton."

At last she was compelled to make confession to Horace himself.

"I can't help thinking that perhaps that poor John Robinson—such a commonplace name, isn't it?—is terribly unhappy, and although I would do just the same again, I'm sorry for him, at all events."

"You needn't be," said her lover softly, "he's just the happiest, most to be envied fellow in the world."

She looked at him reproachfully.

"Most to be envied?" she repeated.

"Yes, darling, in all the world. Listen, dear," he added, "John Robinson is one and the same person as Hugh Sinclair and your humble servant. I sent the other story in because at the last moment I hit upon another, and it seemed to me a better idea."

"And it would have been just the same if I'd never interfered," exclaimed poor Mollie. "Oh, Horace, you'll never tell anybody, will you?"

Her lover laughed and promised.

But, nowadays, he's such a very well-known writer that his wife has quite forgotten that his first success was owing—through her interference—not to his talent, but Sir Joseph's pickles.

But, even so, Horace often laughs quietly over "The Tale of a Birthday Number."

J. R. Prothero.

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# A Fishing Adventure.

"WHAT! Going to the island for more fishing? This will be the fourth consecutive day you have been there. It isn't the fishing, it's the girl who goes there. But, I don't believe you have the slightest chance of making her acquaintance."

"That's all you know about it, Jack Bannister. I could get an introduction to her any day if I wanted to."

"That's very easy to say, Arthur White, but you know that it can't be done. That girl is the daughter of the owner of this lake and the island—the man who has stocked its pools with trout and from whom I obtained permission for us to do a little fishing there—and it isn't likely that you could get an introduction. Not one of us three knows anyone here who could undertake the kind office of introducer."

The three young fellows were enjoying a three-week's holiday, part of which they proposed to spend in trout fishing; but Arthur White appeared to be doing more fishing than was agreeable to his companions, who had already spent two days without him—they preferring walking excursions on those days.

White flushed at Bannister's remarks and his annoyance showed itself in words. He was usually a self-possessed young man, and it was rather strange that his companion's banter should irritate him as it evidently did.

"I can get an introduction to-day if I wish," he retorted sharply. "And to prove it I will bet you a sovereign that I come back from the island with her either in her boat or in mine—that is, if she goes fishing there to-day. You're not game enough to take the bet?"

"Done!" exclaimed Bannister. "Pacey"—turning to the third man—"you hold the stakes. I am not at all afraid of losing that piece of gold."

As he spoke, Bannister took a sovereign from his pocket and tossed it into Pacey's open hand; White did the same, and the stakeholder put both coins carefully into his purse while a peculiar smile flickered about his lips.

"Am I to go to the island to watch the game and see who wins the bet?" he asked mischievously. "There is a good deal of brushwood on the island and I dare say I can obtain a full view of the scene without being observed. What do you say, Bannister?"

"No!" It was White who answered, and he did it very decidedly. "You know me well enough not to doubt that I shall play fair, don't you?"

"A sovereign isn't picked up as easily as that every day," remarked Pacey in a tone of pretended indifference, "and I thought you might arrange the matter with the lady and go halves in the sovereign."

A laugh from Bannister, in which Pacey joined, cut short the angry retort that rose to White's lips, but the laughter only served to make him more angry inwardly and more determined to win the bet.

The spot where Miss Rose Hayling was angling for trout was one of the quaintest on the island. The configuration of the place was sufficiently interesting to attract the notice even of a casual observer. A few yards to the right of her the water came sliding down a smooth slope of some thirty feet, and the continual running had worn the lower banks so smooth that the fisher had to be careful of getting too near the edge, as the least slip would send him or her into the water without a chance of being able to clutch at anything to prevent the catastrophe.

By the time the water had reached the particular spot at which Miss Hayling stood, it was quiet and suitable for her purpose.

"Five," murmured the young lady as she neatly landed a six-ounce trout and placed it in the basket. "That isn't bad work, and I have had the pleasure of being quite alone to-day. Those three may be very nice men, but I don't want them. I am half inclined to believe that one of them was here yesterday; I thought I heard signs of his presence, but I didn't see him, for which I was thankful. Now for the sixth, and then I must get back."

She was just on the point of throwing the line for the final catch when she heard a breaking of twigs above her and she saw a basket come tumbling through the air, spilling trout in its flight, and then she observed the figure of a man with outstretched arms, apparently engaged in a novel attempt to "shoot" the slope down which the water was running. The next instant the man went splashing into the basin in front of her and disappeared.

Rose Hayling gave a little cry of dismay, but she was a young woman of nerve and at once began to think of rendering practical assistance. Then a head appeared above the water, and in spite of its bedraggled look she recognised one of "those young men."

"However did you get there? Can you get out?" she asked, anxiously. "Let me help you," she added, as she stepped nearer to the edge.

"Don't come too close," warned Arthur White, raising one hand and waving her back. "You will slip in if you do. I'm all right and can get out alone, thank you. But where is that big trout?"

She turned in the direction in which he was looking and above her she saw a big fish attached to a line which had caught on the branch of a tree. It was struggling to get free, but it was held fast by the hook, and the weight of the rod hanging on the other side kept it suspended in the air.

"What a beauty!" exclaimed Rose involuntarily. "Why, it must weigh about three pounds!" In her

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admiration she had momentarily forgotten the plight of the fisherman.

"I should think it was!" came from the man in the water. "Can't you get hold of it before it releases itself and drops into the water?"

"I'll try. But how about yourself? Do let me help you!"

It required an effort to refuse such an offer from the girl who formed the subject of his admiration and the subject of a bet, but he did refuse it and began to scramble for the bank while she endeavoured to dislodge the trout.

She accomplished her task without much difficulty by means of a forked stick, and when she turned to look at him she found that he was still treading water and apparently unable to clamber up the side.

"Can't you get out?" she cried, once more becoming anxious. "No, I can see you can't; the banks are too steep and smooth. Wait a little and I will help."

She seized a cord that lay in her basket, tied one end securely round the trunk of a sapling and threw the other end to him.

In a couple of minutes he was by her side, dripping wet but otherwise—to all appearances—none the worse for his ducking.

"But how did you——"

"I was trying to land that trout and slipped," he replied, as she paused without finishing her inquiry. She did not notice that he seemed rather confused. He went on hurriedly: "I slipped somehow, and down I came to frighten you."

"Well, you did startle me a little," confessed Rose, "But you will catch your death of cold; you must get back to your hotel at once. Where is your boat?"

"I am afraid that I have come upon you very unceremoniously," said White apologetically. "I believe I have the honour of addressing Miss Hayling? My name is White, Arthur White. May we accept this as an introduction?"

Rose drew herself up stiffly for a moment and White felt it would not be safe to push matters far. Then Rose answered, unbending, that she thought it might be accepted in lieu of a more formal affair and again asked him about his boat.

White felt awkward. He began to say hard things to himself for having made that foolish bet. It was really lowering the girl, and he experienced remorse for his action. She was worthy of higher thought than that. But he was in a tight corner, and in some confusion he stammered out a reply to her question.

"Unfortunately, my boat is adrift. I suppose I forgot to secure it or did not tie the rope properly; anyhow, it is drifting about on the lake and I must wait till I am taken off."

There was a moment's silence; Rose felt that it was her bounden duty to offer him a seat in her boat, while White, now that he had the chance of winning his bet more easily than he had anticipated, was revolving in his mind the most polite manner in which he could refuse her offer when it came. Such are the oddities of human nature.

The offer came and he felt forced to accept it; Rose declared that she had had enough fishing for one day and was quite ready to go home. White took the oars and rowed, but he insisted upon taking her home and would not listen to her suggestion that he should direct the boat to his hotel and leave her to row back to her father's private landing stage. She wondered why he was so persistent in his refusal, and all the time he was hoping that by so doing he would avoid being seen by Bannister and Pacey.

When he had helped her out of the boat and had handed to her the basket with the five trout, he asked her if she would accept the three-pounder, but she gracefully, though firmly declined. He tossed it to the bottom of the boat, and, after wishing her good day and promising to send the boat back at once, he pulled off again.

"Hullo! Had a ducking?" asked Bannister and Pacey in a breath as their companion appeared, soaked to the skin. "And how about the bet?" asked Bannister.

"Lost it!" was the reply. "And I lost my footing also and got wet." And that was all they could get out of him.

"I have made a big donkey of myself," muttered White to himself several times during the following day. "Of course she could see that I was playing her a trick, for she never once hinted that we might row round after my boat. I expect I have lost all chance with her, yet that affair of yesterday has made me more in love with her than ever." He groaned in spirit. "She's a girl out of a million, and I might have had a chance if I hadn't made such a confounded fool of myself. Bother Bannister and his bet too!"

He debated within himself whether he should go back to London immediately or stay at the hotel and endeavour to retrieve himself. He was of a good family and quite a match for Miss Hayling from a financial point of view, and if he could recover lost ground he might reasonably hope to win her. But could he retrieve himself?

He made up his mind to try, and a conversation that took place between him and his two companions one week later indicated that he had, at least, made some progress. Bannister and Pacey both made allusions to the frequency of his visits to the island and the fact that Miss Hayling also seemed very partial to similar outings.

Three more days passed and Arthur White announced rather sheepishly that he was invited by Mr. Hayling to form one of a party in a day's excursion to one of the sights of the district.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bannister in surprise. "Then you have got as far as that, eh, I say, old fellow, let us know when the day is fixed, won't you?"

White pretended to treat the question with indifference, but a slight increase of colour betrayed him. Bannister and Pacey made lame jokes about lovers and did their best to make White feel uncomfortable, but they did not succeed in drawing him any further before he left them to join the party.

That afternoon, White and Rose Hayling strayed from the others and found themselves in a secluded spot by the side of a stream which reminded them both very forcibly of the adventure which led to the introduction to each other. Involuntarily they looked at one another and their cheeks became of a brighter hue. Their eyes sank again, but the emotions which caused this were different in the two young persons.

"Bother that bet!" muttered the uncomfortable White under his breath. "Perhaps it would be better—but she would——"

"Doesn't this remind you of—of the island?" asked Rose in some confusion.

"Very much indeed!" remarked White with some show of warmth.

A long pause followed.

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At length White took his courage in both hands and began desperately:

"Miss Hayling—Rose—I am going to ask you a question."

"Oh, I hope it isn't a riddle; I never was good at conundrums," replied Rose, sweetly, fixing her eyes on some distant object and trying her hardest to keep the tell-tale colour from rising to her cheeks.

"No, it isn't!" cried White, feeling more desperate than ever. "At least, it isn't to me and I don't think it will be to you. But first I have a confession to make."

"A confession, Mr. White?" asked Rose Hayling, raising her eyebrows.

"Yes. You remember when I had that accident on the island and tumbled into the water? Well, it wasn't an accident."

"What was it, then?"

"A trick. I feel the most despicable man under the sun. Rose, I—well, I may as well tell it straight out—I made a bet that I would get an introduction to you and row you home, and I purposely tumbled in front of you in order to get that introduction."

"And you got the chance of rowing me home, too. Was that a trick? I suppose you cut your boat adrift with that intention? It was hardly the sort of thing a gentleman would do!"

If ever a man felt crushed, that man was Arthur White. He could not lift his eyes to those of the girl he loved; he could only indulge in the insane pastime of throwing pebbles into the stream. Had he turned his eyes to her, his task would have been rendered far more easy.

"Have you nothing to say in mitigation?" she asked in a strange voice.

"Yes!" he exclaimed vehemently. "I love you! That is the explanation of it all. But I am not quite so bad as you may think me; I regretted the bet as soon as I had introduced myself to you, and I blamed myself for treating you in such an unworthy fashion. I tried to get out of the affair by declining your offer of a seat in your boat, but you insisted and the pleasure was too great for me to resist. But I took care to row you home instead of going towards my hotel as you wished—I did that to avoid my companions seeing me and you together."

"And you won your bet?" The voice was still strained.

"No, I lost it. I told them I had lost it and I paid the money. So, you see, I did what I could to repair my error. Rose, dearest Rose, do not think too harshly of me! Tell me, there is yet some hope for me?"

He was looking at her boldly now and had taken her two little white hands in his big brown ones. She made no resistance, but her eyes were downcast and she tried to avoid his ardent gaze.

"Rose, can you forgive me? Will you not tell me that there is hope for me?"

The answer came in the brief word "yes."

He drew nearer to her and placed one strong arm round her waist. Her head sank on his shoulder and his fears were set aside.

"I am not sure," began Rose Hayling about half-an-hour later, "that there is not a little confession due from me. One of your friends is Mr. John Bannister, I believe?"

"Yes, I knew it."

"Well, Arthur dear, he is my cousin and—and—we had a little bet, too."

White looked at her in some surprise, but his clasp of her waist did not relax. This seemed to reassure her, and she continued more boldly:

"I think that my cousin Jack must be a match-maker and that he has laid his plans for bringing us together. He told me that he was coming down here, but he declined our hospitality for reasons which he said he would communicate later. In the course of conversation he offered to bet me that I could not catch so many trout within a specified time, and on accepting this bet, we made another."

"That was to get you on the island every day?"

"I expect so. The second bet was that I dare not ride across the lake in a boat with a visitor whom I might encounter on the island, if he offered to do it. I did not suppose that anyone would offer to do it, as I did not see how the occasion was to arise; but I am rather strong-minded and do not like to be dared, so I went a little further and said that, if necessary, I would even offer a man a seat in my boat."

There was a pause and then Rose continued.

"I made the offer to you, when you said your boat had drifted away, quite innocently and out of good nature; and it was not, I assure you, until we were fairly in the boat that I remembered the bet. I have seen Jack since, and he vows that I did it on purpose; so if he chaffs you, you will make him understand that it was nothing of the sort, won't you, Arthur?"

"Of course I will! It seems to me that Bannister has been trying to bring us together. He induced you to visit the island every day, and I remember now—although he pretended to chaff me about my love of fishing—that he really induced me to come to the same spot. It was he, too, who proposed that we should come here for a holiday! And—I can see through it all now!—you are the cousin Rose whose praises he has so often sung to me."

"It's as clear as daylight," cried Rose. "He is continually talking about his chum Arthur whenever we meet. Of course, that is you! Oh, fancy cousin Jack Bannister acting the part of match-maker!"

"Well, it has turned out for the best, Rose, and has brought happiness to both of us. But I forgot, you haven't specifically said you would be my wife."

"Because, you foolish boy, you haven't properly asked me yet!"

Evidently, Arthur did ask her and received a proper answer, for he was able to tell Bannister and Pacey, when he returned to the hotel that evening, that although the day was not exactly fixed, it soon would be.

Among the presents that were sent to the happy couple on the occasion of their marriage was a big stuffed trout. It came from Bannister, who said that he had found it lying neglected at the bottom of the boat on the day when White had a duck'ng, and he had taken care of it as he knew that is would fall a very acceptable wedding gift, one that would remind them of what they would afterwards regard as the happiest moment of their lives.

G. Merriam.

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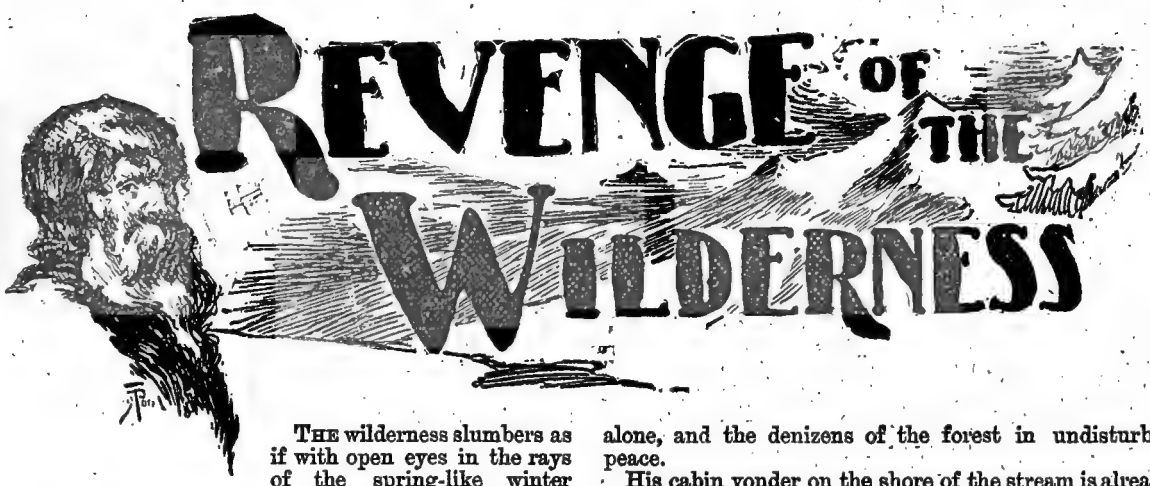


THE wilderness slumbers as if with open eyes in the rays of the spring-like winter sun. The snow has already melted from the branches of the trees, but the drifts lie deep in the forest, on the ice, and on the fens. The sun shines warm in the open places, but the air is chilly in the shade. On the wood-covered slopes of the mountain the fir needles have already thawed so much that they emit a faint odour of rosin, and the birches spread in the middle of the day their first fine fragrance as if they had a foretaste of coming spring mornings.

A ski-runner has stopped at about the middle of the mountain slope in an open place, where he can view the landscape below, where fens and lakes, streams and woods interchange. At the foot of the mountain where, between two water-courses, a waterfall reflects the sun, he sees the roof of his cabin.

He is a hunter, the sole inhabitant of these lonely forests as far as the eye can reach from the crest of the mountain. The whole country surrounding these water-courses he has taken possession of, as there is no one else who could claim it.

No trace of human footsteps has been seen here since the year of the great war, when some fled westward, others again were carried by force to foreign countries.

He inhales the mild air and the fresh scents of the forests, while his look, satisfied and friendly, penetrates the bushy hair which covers his forehead.

Contentment dwells in his mind—contentment because the power of winter is about to be broken and its iron grip has loosened. Not even this winter has brought about what he feared. The ski-ing will now soon be over, before long the snowdrifts will disappear, and no hunters from inhabited regions have shown themselves here.

Far away has remained this unknown danger of which he always had a presentiment without knowing whence it would come. If it would but come at once so that he were through with it. But his mind is always tranquil in the spring when it has failed to appear during the winter. In the summer no one could find the way here.

He is a broad-shouldered and muscular man, but also tall and slender. His dress consists of homespun and furs. He carries on his shoulders his weapons, bow and quiver of arrows, and on his back a bundle of traps and snares which he is bringing home from the forest. The hare and the fox do no longer walk into his traps, nor does the ptarmigan run into his snare. The coupling time has come for them all. The game must be left alone, and the denizens of the forest in undisturbed peace.

His cabin yonder on the shore of the stream is already full of pelts, his catch during the winter. To-morrow he will load them on his sledge, and on his skis pull the load to the market. There the merchants will delight in them, and say that better furs could not be bought even from the king's hunters, but where they come from nobody knows, for Ahra does not explain his circumstances and place of abode. Always has he led questioners and spies astray, and his purchases have been brought home without leaving a trace behind him.

With growing satisfaction he looks toward the wilderness, this friend who does not know of anyone but him, and a smile overspreads his lips. He feels possessed of a sudden whim: How would it be to slide, for fun, down the dizzy height to the ice and let the wind howl about his ears?

He is just about to do so when the sound of a barking dog reaches his ears from the foot of the mountain.

He is startled, for this is not the usual bark of his dog, spirited and yet friendly, which he emits when barking at a squirrel in the trees, nor yet the strained and serious one when chasing the fleeing game. It sounds as if intended for some large animal which the dog both hates and fears but dares not attack, for the bark is cautious, doubtful and at the same time angry.

Ahra whistles to the dog, whereat the bark is changed into a howl.

"A wolf," he supposes, and runs down on his skis.

"A wolf it is," he decides more firmly when the dog with tail between his legs meets him halfway on the slope.

The man's look is getting cloudy, the satisfied smile disappears from his lips. He bends his muscular body, and the most intense curiosity is reflected in his face as he takes a fresh start to hunt his prey.

The dog, who feels braver in the company of his master, retraces his old tracks down the steep, but when he reaches even ground he makes a short bend and disappears among the birches on the shore of the lake.

Ahra runs without being able to stop his skis at the place where the dog turned in among the trees, but a the moment he crosses the tracks he notices that the are not the tracks of a wolf, but those of skis.

He stops instantly, jumps into the snow and stays the drift up to his knees a good while, as astonished if lightning has struck before his eyes. Then he moun

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his skis slowly and approaches the strange tracks, bent and watching.

Yes; they are really ski-tracks. Someone has come from the lake, skied up the forest here and seems farther on to have again approached the shore in the direction of Ahra's cabin. Whence has the ski-runner come? Where is he going?

Who is he? A Finn from the South he is not, that Ahra knows from the tracks made by the runners; neither is he one of the Dwina people, their skis are broader. This one has under his ski a piece of reindeer's hide that in the ascent of the hill has left a plain mark. Therefore, he must be a Lap.

But what is he doing here? And whence does he come? From the South he has not come, for Laps dare not go to the inhabited regions yonder. From the North he has come to linger in this neighbourhood. He has come here to spy, and when he does not find more than one inhabitant he will at the beginning of summer bring his whole tribe down the streams to fish in the lakes here.

Ahra ran beside the strange tracks which after having made a slight detour into the woods, turned abruptly in a straight direction towards his cabin.

This cabin is low, half-imbedded in the earth, built by an open spot at the shore of the calm water below the rapids. In the centre of the open stands the storehouse where Ahra keeps his pelts, dried fish, salted meat and other stock. It is built on poles as safety against the robber bands of the forest, the wolves, the foxes, the weasels, and the rats. These often come here rummaging and smelling all over, but cannot get hold of anything. Many a fox has he tracked from here, hunted and killed when they, starving, have roved around in search of plunder. To judge from the tracks, the Lap has stopped in the open place and withdrawn from there, sneaking back behind the cabin. There he has left his skis and on foot walked round the cabin to the storehouse, which he has looked at from all sides.

With growing satisfaction he looks toward the wilderness.

Ahra had no more the slightest doubt concerning the object of the slant-eyed Lap's travels in this neighbourhood and what he sought here. It was also clear to him what he had to do. If the Lap did not succeed in returning to his tribe, the others away yonder would understand that destruction awaited them, and therefore he not venture here.

The Lap had not gone very far, as he, no doubt, had left only at noon, for Ahra noticed at once that the ski-tracks led over hoar-frost, which already had begun to fall from the trees.

He had made up his mind and prepared for departure. He dressed in his cleanest and best hunting suit, put provisions in his birch-bark bag and brought forth his best weapons—bow and arrows, a hunting knife, a hatchet and a light spear, which also could serve him as a ski-staff. Finally, he selected his best skis which he only used on long journeys.

When he now mounted his skis and glided along the thicket he felt as when hunting big game—the same excited and expectant feeling in his bosom, the same tension in his limbs and the same swelling unrest in his blood to get away.

His eyes were afire, his lips compressed, sharp lines showed around his mouth, and in his first ardour he exerted confidently, almost angrily, all his power, as though his prey were to be found in the nearest field.

The tracks of the Lap, which he started to follow immediately, and with which those of the pursuing dog were seen to mingle, led above the rapids along the course of the stream to the shore of the big lake.

A short distance above the rapids the Lap had stopped to fish. He had cut a hole in the ice near the shore and angled there. He had caught some fish, too, the scoundrel, cleaned it and left the scales and entrails on the snow.

Ahra's anger was rising.

"The Lap has been fishing in my water, and as in mockery, has thrown the refuse there. A thief, a noxious animal is he who devours the prey that has been trapped by the hunter. Perhaps he has done this to spoil my fishing and to drive away my luck."

This thought gave fresh nourishment to Ahra's resentment, and with powerful strokes he glided back to follow the tracks anew, which again led to the shore of the lake, and always in the shelter of the woods. He seemed to have entertained a certain fear that he was engaged in a wrongful pursuit.

First at the centre of the bay, where there was a group of islands, the tracks changed their former direction and led in the shelter of some smaller islands across the bay.

After reaching the opposite shore they went straight through the woods toward a ridge, whose bare and timberless top was lit by the setting sun, while the lower places were already in the shade.

Unacquainted as he seemed to be with the surroundings, the Lap had gone up there to learn the direction of the route and to reconnoitre.

Twilight also prevailed on the mountain top when Ahra reached there after having skied through the swampy woodland, all the time following the Lap's trail.

The latter, however, had so long a start that Ahra could no longer hope to reach him this evening. He wa

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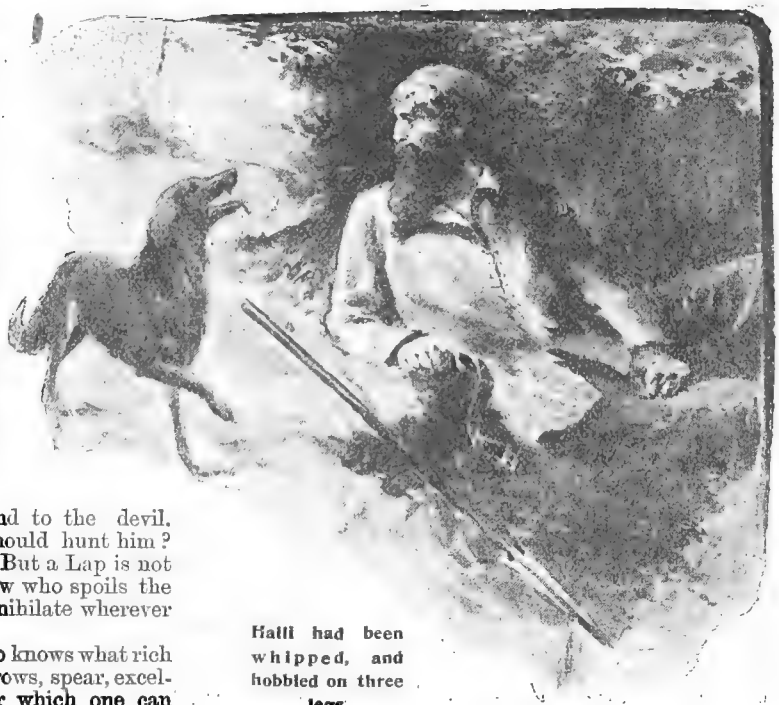
forced about midnight to go to rest in order to move early in the morning.

While he was looking for a suitable place to sleep, he heard the barking of a dog somewhere in the distance. Halli had followed the Lap's trail all day, and had not returned yet. It was probably he who growled yonder. Ahra began to make new calculations. The dog had not got into a fight, for then there would have been a greater noise. Perhaps the Lap had killed him, shot Halli before he could attack, or maybe he had pierced him with a spear.

Ahra began to feel low-spirited, as he had not dared to make a large fire in his camp, although he was wet through with perspiration. And had the Lap now on top of it all killed his comrade and friend?

"Why should I pursue him? Why do I not let him depart in peace and to the devil. What harm has he done me that I should hunt him? One ought not to kill a human being. But a Lap is not human, he is a dog. An envious fellow who spoils the woods and fishing one has a right to annihilate wherever found.

"Perhaps he is also a rich prey. Who knows what rich thing he is carrying? A good bow, arrows, spear, excellent skis. Perhaps gold and silver, for which one can get everything he needs."



Halli had been whipped, and hobbled on three legs.

All Ahra's scruples vanished when Halli, at the break of day, came to his couch. He had been whipped, and hobbled on three legs. So soon as it became light enough to see, Ahra started, firmly decided to hunt down the stranger, even though it carried him into Lapland.

The Lap did not seem to have been in a hurry. When he had reached the deep forest on the other side of the mountain, he had skied hither and yon, something in long curves, but steadily in a northerly direction.

Here and there he had dug under the snow to see if any lichen grew there. Ah, this was, then, his object in coming here. Once he had caught a hare, and another time he had shot a woodcock, to judge from the remains of the bird.

Skilfully had he done all this like a fox or a lynx that only by the aid of their scent know at a distance where their prey is hiding and steal right upon it without making unnecessary detours. A splendid huntsman is the Lap, none is his equal in the forest. The denizens of the forest fly to meet him as surely as they flee from others.

Envy possessed Ahra's mind, and he bit his teeth together. The consuming envy of the huntsman grieved him, as he followed the Lap's trail, which here took a short cut over low meadows and then turned into such thick underwood that his big pursuer only with difficulty could push himself through.

From the wooded vale the trail continued to a height on the top of which the fugitive had made his fire. Here the Lap had intended to spend the night, here were seen plain traces of his meeting with the dog. To judge from the evidence, he had tried to entice the dog with pieces of meat, but when Halli did not allow himself to be fooled, the Lap had thrown a big stick of wood after him.

"Halli, my true, my faithful friend, you have not allowed yourself to be taken in by the Lap's tricks, however skilfully he may know how to enchant the animals with his looks."

When the dog now had returned to his master, the vagabond fled in a hurry. He had in the greatest haste, abandoned his fire and camp. His uneven tracks amused Ahra, it looked as if the Lap had tried to fly, so hurriedly had he paddled forward, as when a young weak-winged water-fowl flutteringly whips the water without making any headway.

Ahra now exerted all his power, and only relaxed his speed when he noticed that the scared fugitive gradually had calmed himself, and begun to run slower. The Lap had either got tired or he had begun to consider his fears exaggerated.

The tracks were now even again, and the skis had run as lightly as if an animal had hastened forward on the drifts. Nicely ran the trail on the frozen snow, now along the ridges, now through the primeval forest. Sometimes the Lap had, for fun, let it drive down the mountain slope, and easily had he ascended the most precipitous heights.

Ahra forgot gradually why he really hunted the stranger—forgot that he pursued him to kill him; and he travelled along like a wanton boy who, in merry frolics, runs about in the woods and quite secure looks for a roguish friend without knowing when he will appear from behind a tree trunk or peep out from behind a stone.

Away yonder, at the brink of the ridge, the Lap had on a high rock eaten his meal, after which he seemed to have light-heartedly skied down the height straight over the dangerous precipices without slipping and without using his staff.

By a long detour Ahra had to run down the same precipice in shelter of the trees, and by constantly using his staff. Below the mountain was a steep rock so high

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that the mightiest fire of the wilderness did not reach its top. Ahra had to take a round-about way but the Lap had leaped clear over the tree tops and then disappeared. Had he flown through the air, or remained in the trees?

In vain Ahra searched beneath the rock in the dense pine forest, in vain he looked toward the tree tops, and equally in vain between the trees. He believed himself bewitched, and began to suspect that he had chanced to pursue the veritable Son of the Forest, who skis on the earth when it pleases him, but as often takes a short cut over the tree tops. Ahra thought of returning.

But the skirrnner had not stayed in the tree tops, had not flown through the air, but reached the earth in a marsh that lay so well hidden below the mountain, sheltered by the trees that no one could guess its existence before the shore was reached. There the Lap had been thrown from the brink of the rock without falling. Slightly had he tottered on his knees, and his "peski" grazed the snow where its hem had made a wheel-like impression. Thereupon he had serenely skied forward.

The pursuer again considered giving up all hunt for such a game. Twilight had commenced, but nevertheless he continued forward.

The sides of the swamp were steep all round, and there seemed to be no exit. The tracks of the Lap led into a sort of winding lane, inclosed by mountain walls; but Ahra discovered at last an opening which led into another somewhat larger swamp, likewise inclosed by steep wood-covered mountain heights. The evening shades were falling more and more. The sun had already sunk behind the mountains, and the rocks seemed in the dusky light to rise higher and steeper. Ahra did not know this neighbourhood, he had never been here before. He really did not know where he was, and something within him commanded him at last to enter upon his return journey.

He did not have time to cry out.

Still doubtful about what to do he was gliding forward slowly, when he found a hole in the ice in which the Lap again had caught fish and cleaned the same. He must just have been there, as the thrown-away entrails of the fish had not had time to freeze.

This sight broke the spell and drove the hunter again after his prey. It could not be very far away. The place was just one that would tempt the fugitive to make the camp for the night.

The lakelet was nearly round and in its centre rose an island like an hillock. In its direction the tracks of the Lap were to be seen.

Ahra now tied his dog and commanded him to be be quiet, and started in the shelter of the rocks to steal round the lake. When he returned, after having walked right round the lake, he felt sure the Lap was on the island from which no track came.

At this moment a fire gleamed from between the trees on the island. The Lap consequently had no idea that he was being pursued. Soon the fire blazed in the green branches, lighting the dense pines of the island and sending straight towards the sky a thick smoke, which, in its lower part, was black, but as it rose higher was slightly tinged by the evening-red.

Ahra pressed himself in strained expectation close to a rock. He stood there completely immovable, as only a hunter can when he lies in ambush for game.

Darkness settled, the evening-red ceased, and the smoke could no longer be distinguished, but he saw the fire glimmer and heard it crackle when the brands were stirred.

Once or twice he heard the Lap hum a song. Then the humming ceased. The fire decreased as from a stock fire that burns evenly. Ahra heard no sound now except the splashing of an occasional water drop falling yonder among the rocks, while the stars above him twinkled against the surface of the water as against the bottom of a deep well.

Once more Ahra hesitated about what to do. He felt as if something mysterious had frightened him, as if it lay in ambush for him and forced him to stand still, and almost kept his breath.

But when the night grew colder, and the cold was biting, and he still saw the fire yonder and imagined the Lap in his warm clothing resting on soft pine twigs by the fire, anger suddenly mastered him.

"That scoundrel wishes to provoke me, he has come here to spy upon me, to mock me and inveigle me into running after him. He is an impudent vagabond—a robber who takes the game from me and spoils my fishing, and is an abomination to my woods."

Ahra grasped his spear, mounted his skis and glided forward in the direction of the fire.

The Lap was sleeping by the fire and did not notice the approach of his treacherous foe.

Ahra dismounted as he reached the island and stole on him with bent body.

The sleeper was a youth in a "peski" of reindeer skin, hemmed with red cloth. At the foot of a pine he rested on his back with his hands under his head, while the fire lighted his childish innocent features.

Ahra had never seen the holy Son of the Forest, but like this he had always imagined him.

Perhaps he was Nyrikki himself, Tapio's son, who had come here at the command of his father to examine the woods, and next winter drive his game here. One must not disturb Nyrikki. One must not hurt him. If he comes in your way, you must avoid him.

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The point of his spear, which had been aimed ready for instant attack, was lowered, and Ahra stepped back in order to withdraw. Then a twig broke beneath his foot. The sleeping boy awoke, sat upright with a quick movement and rubbed the sleep from his eyes.

Then Ahra lifted his spear and forced it with such power into the boy's bosom that it went right through his body and nailed the youth to his resting place.

He did not even have time to cry out—he moaned like a shot hare, while the blood spurted from his mouth and nostrils, but in the death agony his body twisted itself and sprawled like a fish in a fisherman's gig, whereat the handle of the spear quivered so much that he was forced to grasp it with both hands.

The boy twisted continually in his agony, and shook convulsively the spear, and the murderer's hand, and his whole body, until his power gradually diminished and finally ceased, and he sank down dead.

But when Ahra wanted to pull out his spear, the point of which had penetrated deep into the ground, he felt a shiver, first in his body, then in his hands, in the spear itself and in the body of the murdered man—a shivering fit so violent as nearly to tear the clothes off his body.

He could not even disentangle his hands from the spear handle. The more he exerted himself the more violently they trembled, and he felt himself as thoroughly shaken as if he had been bewitched.

It is the witchcraft of Lapland that shakes him, its influence has entered the murderer's body from the blood of his victim.

Then comes his dog, who had broken loose, and jumps with a dismal whine, up to his master, whereat his hands are able to let go of the bewitched spear.

But the spell was not broken; vengeance was not yet satisfied.

Ahra staggered to his skis at the shore, and skied to the edge of the swamp, where he stopped and where the howl of the dog from the island reached his ears.

He wished to cut himself a ski-staff from a young fir, but his trembling hand could not hold the axe, then he tried to pull out the tree by the roots, but his trembling hands refused to serve him.

Without a staff Ahra skied homeward in his former tracks. But not even in his home was he free from the curses of the dead. Whatever weapon or tool he may take—spear, staff, bow, axe, oar or fish-spear—always the same shivering fit came over him.

He must leave his beloved wilderness and go to inhabited regions; he must desert his cabin and his storehouse by the stream; must leave the game, the forests and the groves and all his possessions, leave the paradise he owned to someone who, some time in the future, would chance to come up here to live and take possession of them all.

Arrived at a new settlement, strangers put hoe and spade in the hands of Ahra, the quondam free and daring huntsman, and these tools he could hold, no trembling prevented their use.

Neither great nor deep are the thoughts that come and go in Ahra's mind. Only this is clear to him, that if he had let the Lapland youth, undisturbed, depart his way—if he had not attacked Tapio's son—he would not now dig here in a rocky ground.

For the wilderness has avenged its son, and has banished the man who broke its peace.

J. L. Thorburn.

"See Jones over there, laughing so heartily? Someone must have told him a funny story."

"More likely Jones told it himself."

"You have a magnificent library."

"Yes. When I think of the amount of money I've sunk in that collection of books it makes me feel quite intellectual."

Mother: "Instead of beating the cat, Willie, I wish you would amuse yourself with your rocking-horse."

Willie: "Yes; but when I beat the cat he howls, and the horse doesn't."

"Do you believe there is really anything in phrenology?"

"I do. I had my head examined by a phrenologist once, and the moment he came to my first bump he told me that my wife used an old-fashioned rolling-pin."

Doctor: "Dyspepsia. You want to drink a cup of hot water first thing every morning."

Patient: "I always do. My landlady invariably serves 'tea' for breakfast."

"See that fellow who just went into the bank? Well, five years ago he was sweeping the floors of that very institution."

"And now he is——"

"Doing it still."

Mrs. Brooks: "I suppose the Smiths have a complete history of our family by this time."

Brooks: "Why?"

Mrs. Brooks: "They engaged the servant girl who left us last week."

"Mamma," cried little Willie from the bath room, "please get me another sponge."

"Why, what's the matter with the one you have?" asked the mother.

"It's full of holes and leaks awfully," was the reply.

Mr. Meeker, who had gone to the front door to answer the postman's knock, put his head inside the door of the room where his wife was sitting.

"It's a letter for me, my dear," he said. "Shall I open it?"

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# The Wooing of Fame.

ANTONIE, a bookseller of the Quai d'Orsay, tried two matches on the asphalt pavement, and was then forced to resort to the lining of his coat, for the morning was very damp. Having at last ignited the tobacco in his short clay pipe, he proceeded to arrange his wooden cases along the parapet of the river. Next he affixed the price tags—ranging from ten to one hundred sous—and hung out two glaring "Une Feuille Morte" posters.

Thus prepared for custom, the ancient Antonie seated himself on his little camp-stool and shivered until the sun came through the fog, bringing with it a fat priest who purchased, and a shabby bibliomaniac who simply browsed.

Towards noon business grew brisker, and even a Member of the Institute paused to look over the stock.

"This is a glorious day, friend," he observed in measured terms, but before Antonie could word a reply a sallow-faced young man pushed forward and demanded instant attention.

"One copy of 'Une Feuille Morte,'" he cried. "Two copies—three—all that you have—quick!"

"There is but one left," said Antonie, producing a red-and-gold volume; "they sell very readily of late."

With a fierce cry of anger, the young man flung down a gold piece. Then, to the astonishment of all beholders, he caught up the book, wrenched it in two, and tearing out page after page, wildly stamped them under foot.

"A curse upon it!" he raved. "I will destroy every copy in Paris—in France—none shall escape me. 'Une Feuille Morte' must not be read."

Persons in the street paused to learn the cause of the disturbance. The gamins formed a circle round the young man and jeered at his insane conduct. In return the victim crumpled up handfuls of the printed leaves and hurled them in the faces of his tormentors. At the very height of the excitement a carriage drove up and a beautiful woman sprang out.

"Louis!" she cried, forcing her way through the dense crowd. "Louis, my love, forgive!"

The young man started violently and gazed about as if unable to believe his senses. In a hoarse voice he asked:

"Who speaks?"

"I, my love," said the woman, as she ran forward and threw her arms round his neck. "I, Marie d'Amoureux."

There was a murmur of surprise from the on-lookers. The writer of "Une Feuille Morte"—"They were once lovers."

"Louis," pleaded the woman, "forgive me. I was carried away by my success. I still love you."

"Leave me," cried Louis harshly. "I will have no words with you."

"Louis," said the woman, as she quickly mounted the parapet, "if you do not forgive me—if you still renounce my love—I will throw myself into the river."

The young man turned on his heel without a word—and that instant Marie d'Amoureux leaped from the parapet. As she struck the water Louis uttered a wild cry of remorse, and before anyone could stay him followed the woman into the Seine.

Old Antonie was so overcome by the excitement that he sank down on his stool and panted for breath. The dignified Member of the Institute seized a bookback and fanned him vigorously.

"They are saved," cried the crowd. "A boatman has rescued them. He has dragged them into his barge."

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated the Member. "She has the eyes and hair of an angel." And then to Antonie: "Have you seen them before? You must get me her book—'Une Feuille Morte.'"

"The man I have seen," replied the old bookseller, "but the woman never. It is not long since I caused the arrest of this same Louis. It was very sad."

"They are being restored on the barge," said the Member. "I will wait until they are brought up. Come, now, what of this one of the yellow face?"

It was seldom that Antonie had so distinguished a listener, and he related the incident with great relish.

"I had noticed this Louis," he began. "Every morning he would come and look, but go away without buying. One day a gentleman came to me and said: 'Antonie, you are being robbed by a young man with a sallow face. I can see it all from my window across the way. Keep your eyes open and have the police at hand.'

"It came about the very next morning. The young man approached, handled the book and then turned away. He was immediately arrested, and two copies of 'Une Feuille Morte' were found beneath his coat.

"Before the magistrate he told a story so strange that it has since been on every lip. His sweetheart, Marie d'Amoureux, wrote 'Une Feuille Morte.' No one would publish it. Marie was in tears. The young man took his savings and had the novel printed. No one would sell it; for there was no one to buy.

"Then came an act of still greater devotion. Louis, with so much of his salary as he could spare, purchased copies of the work from Marie, telling her that they were ordered by the booksellers. These copies he would place on the bookstalls by stealth, hoping that they might be read and appreciated. It was for such an act that I had caused his arrest. The papers told the

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pitiful story, and since then there has been a great demand for the book."

"But what of the trouble to-day?" interrupted the Member impatiently. "Why did he treat her so cruelly?"

"In return for her ingratitude," replied Antonie. "When success came she forgot Louis, who was poor and unattractive. Her smiles were all for another. Heaven only knows what has worked so great a change in her heart, and brought her to so passionate a deed. Perhaps she has only now learnt all that Louis has done for her."

"Ah, friend," sighed the Member, "how could he resist such an appeal? She has the eyes and hair of an angel."

"See," said Antonie, "there is a journalist using my bookstall for a desk while he makes notes of this interesting happening. How his pencil flies over the paper!"

The Member withdrew his gaze from the river. On beholding the object of Antonie's remarks, he exclaimed:

"My nephew!" and then louder: "Pierre, I congratulate you on being an eye-witness of this event. Your paper will doubtless appreciate your account."

Pierre glanced up, smiled, nodded, and went on with his writing. At last he closed his notebook, placed it in his pocket, and then waved a handkerchief above his head.

"Now uncle," he said, coming to the Member's side, "you will soon have a good look at Louis and Marie; they will enter their cab at this spot. They are now ascending the steps from the river, followed by the boatman."

Before the Member could form a question the crowd fell back and the lovers appeared on the Quay. Hand in hand, they advanced towards the bookstall, where a cab was in waiting. As they passed Pierre, the Member saw Louis direct a sly kick at the journalist's shins, while Marie favoured them both with an expansive grin.

"Nephew," said the Member, when the cab had driven off with its wet occupants, "do you know these persons?"

"In one moment," said Pierre, as he transferred some bank-notes from his pocket to the hand of the gallant boatman who had rescued Louis and Marie. "You may question presently. Now," he laughed, when the boatman had moved away, "I am at your disposal."

"What do you know of this affair?"

"Everything."

"What will be the end of it?"

"A third edition of 'Une Feuille Morte.'"

"I cannot believe," said the Member, "that they would be guilty of making public their inner lives for the sake of vulgar advertising."

"Yet such is the case," replied Pierre. "The book would never have sold without it. This is an enterprising age, uncle. Look!"

A waggon piled high with books and decorated with "Une Feuille Morte" posters had driven up. The crowd closed in around it, struggling to push forward their money and secure a copy of the novel.

"Behold the fruits of vulgar advertising," murmured Pierre.

"Is the book worth reading?" inquired the Member.

"Judge for yourself," answered Pierre. "You have witnessed a part of it. Louis and Marie are playing the plot of the novel—this was the second act. Would you call it interesting?"

"That goes without saying."

"I will also add, for your ears alone, uncle, that the actors are hired ones. The Zoinni brothers, high divers, were paid for leaping into the river, just as the boatman was paid for being there to pull them out. It was all carefully planned by the author."

"It almost surpasses comprehension," said the Member earnestly. "But the real Marie d'Amoureux, the author—I would give something fine to meet a person of such genius. Minds of that calibre are rare, nephew; exceedingly rare."

"You flatter me, uncle," said Pierre, the journalist.

H. M. Strong.


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The "Poom" is the creation of the fancy of Mr. Barry Pain, one of our wittiest living writers, who has written a screamingly funny article about the habits of the "Poom" race, entitled "Nature's Next Moves," in the April number of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.

The April PEARSON'S is crammed with many other interesting papers, and powerful stories. An important article, to be read and remembered, is entitled "Russia's Iron Grip on China," which gives a graphic description of Russia's great enterprise in building the Trans-Siberian Railway from Petersburg to Port Arthur. "Pictures by Telegraph" describes a wonderful invention which enables pictures to be flashed over the telegraph wires as easily as words. The author of that famous book, "How to be Happy Though Married," contributes an intensely interesting paper describing the work of Army Chaplains in time of War. Himself a chaplain to the forces, the writer is able to deal with the subject from personal experience, and tells many good stories of the doings of "sky-pilots," as the soldiers call their chaplains, on the field of battle.

Mr. George Griffith continues, in the April PEARSON'S, his wonderful series of "Stories of Other Worlds," visiting, this month, Jupiter and his satellites, and taking his readers through many extraordinary experiences. Mr. Allen Upward writes again on "Historic Mysteries," while other powerful contributions make up an exceptionally brilliant number.


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# Briton or Boer?

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

## INTRODUCTION.

For years past Britain and the Transvaal have been spoiling for a fight, and it was left to that well-known author, Mr. George Griffith, to write this strong and exciting serial nearly four years ago graphically describing a huge war between the two countries.

The story, coming so soon after the Jameson Raid, was read with unusual interest.

Now that Briton and Boer are in deadly conflict it will be interesting to read the story, and see how far the imagination of the author has actually come true.

### SUMMARY OF OPENING CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—The scene opens on the Rand. It is the eve of Amajuba day, and a State ball is being given. To this comes Prince Paul Regna, a Polish nobleman, and his daughter, Princess Vavara. They are introduced to Dr. Leyds.

CHAPTER II.—Dr. Leyds returns to Pretoria to attend a midnight consultation at the Government buildings. The Prince's rooms are in the Grand Hotel opposite. By tapping the wires, which cross the street at this point, the Prince and his daughter overhear all that goes on, and telegraph the result by secret code to Europe.

CHAPTERS III. AND IV.—Amajuba day dawns. The Secretary accompanies the Prince and Princess to Krugersdorp, where, from the base of the Monument of Independence, the President makes a great proclamation. The Convention of London is abrogated, the absolute independence of the South African Republic is declared; the President unfurls a Union Jack and rends it to pieces. So the storm bursts!

CHAPTERS V. AND VI.—On the following day Major-General Carrington learns at Buluwayo that all the wires have been cut between Rhodesia and the south and east. He concludes that this is due to Boer hostility, and prepares to meet it. Meanwhile a powerful British squadron appears unexpectedly in Delagoa Bay, and Lieutenant Ferris is sent ashore to take possession of the telegraph station.

CHAPTERS VII. AND VIII.—A Russian squadron is in the Bay at the same time. The flagship *Navarin* fires on the British destroyer *Thrasher*. Admiral Dale takes this as an act of war. There is a battle and the Russian squadron is defeated and captured. Michael Ostroff seeks to escape in the *Sokol*. He is taken prisoner, and important dispatches are found in his possession. Admiral Dale calls a council of war.

CHAPTERS IX. AND X.—General Carrington's campaign in the Matoppo Hills ends in the defeat of the rebels, the remnant of whom take refuge in a kopje, which is surrounded. A Rhodesian trooper and a private of Lancers capture a Boer disguised as a Kaffir, and take him into camp.

CHAPTERS XI. AND XII.—The Boer-Kaffir tells General Carrington that the Dutch have risen against British rule all over South Africa. The Matabele surrender, and give up the disguised Boers among them. These are shot. As the force moves southward the scouts are met by a girl, who tells them that the Boers have invaded Rhodesia and are marching on Buluwayo. Meanwhile, Admiral Dale informs the captains of the squadron in Delagoa Bay that no help can be expected from home, and that he intends to take absolute command of the coast.

CHAPTERS XIII. AND XIV.—General Carrington commissions Major Bryan to organise the Matabele Legion, and lead it against a detachment of the Boers lying in wait in a group of kopjes farther down the road. Major Bryan discovers that the girl who has brought the news is his sweetheart, Madge Morrison. Her people have all been killed, and he determines to avenge them. He sends a party of Matabele under Umzilizi on ahead to parley with the Boers.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A LESSON IN NIGHT ATTACKS.

As soon as Umzilizi and his men arrived, about half-an-hour before sundown, at the shallow gorge where the road entered the kopjes, just across the drift of the river Sigabi, a couple of Boers rode out and came clattering at full speed down the road, shouting to them to halt if they didn't want to be shot down. The old Inkosi, who had conned his lesson well, at once halted his men, laid down his rifle, and walked towards them, holding out his hands in token that he was unarmed, and that his intentions were peaceful.

The two Boers cast rapid, curious glances over the long string of armed men, wondering considerably where they had got their equipment from, for every man carried a rifle, and had a bandolier of cartridges slung over his shoulder in addition to the shield and assegais that he carried in his left hand; but what naturally astonished them most was the Maxim gun and carriage which had been dragged conspicuously to the front.

"Where are you from, and where did you get all your guns and that thing from?" said one of the Boers in the Kaffir-Dutch patois.

"Let us come through, Baas," Umzilizi replied in a tone of almost humble entreaty. "It is a long story, and we are not safe here. The English are behind us, and there is a great impi behind them. They are chasing us, and Imposhwan and Ndana are chasing them. There has been a great battle, and they are fighting still far up the road. Let us in and take me to the Commandant-baas so that I may tell him the story, and you may make ready to catch the English here among the hills when the impi drives them in."

The two Boers consulted together for a minute or two, and then the one who had spoken before turned to Umzilizi again, and said:

"You can come through and bring the Maxim with you, but mind—all the kopjes are occupied and you mustn't leave the road. If one man leaves it we will shoot you all down. Remember, there is a rifle behind every stone. Tell your men that if one fires his gun you'll all be shot, then you can come on with me to the Commander-baas."

"Ja Baas, you needn't be afraid; we don't want you to shoot at us; the Amabuna shoot too straight. We only want to help you to eat up the English."

He gave the order to his men, and then the whole troop followed the Boer down the road for about half a mile. Then he was told to halt his troop in the road, and caution them once more against leaving it, and then the Boer turned his horse aside to the right and, curtly bidding Umzilizi to follow him, went off at a quick trot up between two of the kopjes.

As the old chief did so he saw that what he had been told was not far from the truth. Every rock and stone seemed to hide its marksman, and as the little valley opened on to a bend in the road a terrible, sweeping fire could have been poured out of it which must have decimated any hostile advancing force. No doubt, too, the other side of the road

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would be similarly commanded at some other point, and small bodies of men would be placed in all the most advantageous positions farther down.

His conductor led him up by the back of the kopje, which was rather low and flattened at the top. In fact the summit made a little plateau thickly sprinkled with boulders and outcropping rocks, and between two of these, which formed an admirable natural breastwork, he saw a Maxim so placed as to be able to sweep the road for over a mile.

Among the little group of Boers standing beside it there was a rather slight, wiry built man of about forty, some five foot ten in height, with a tawny, straggling beard, a thin, keen face and rather deep-set, bluish-grey eyes. This was Commandant Frederick Potgieter, the man who had led most of the fighting at Krugersdorp and Dornkop against Jameson and his troopers, and cousin to the Piet Potgieter who had been shot with the other spies after the battle of the Nuanetzi.

To him Umzilizi gave a more lengthy and minutely circumstantial account of the great fight that had been going on for nearly two days many miles up the road. He told how the men he had brought with him were all that were left of a regiment which, after dreadful slaughter, had overwhelmed and killed to the last man a body of about two hundred white troopers, and captured, for the first time in all the war, one of the terrible little loud-speakers.

Then he went on to tell how, while this was being done, a great impi under Imposhwan and Ndana, two of their greatest war chiefs, had attacked the main column of the English some miles farther up the road, away beyond the Umzingwani among the hills by Vanda, and lastly how the English were coming down the road with their waggons and guns, fighting all the time, but hard pressed by the impi.

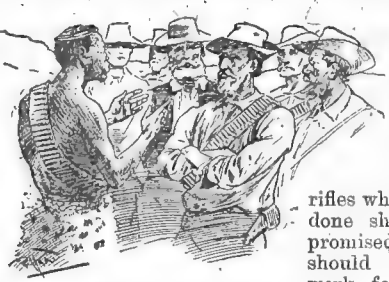
Commandant Potgieter heard him through in silence, watching him keenly all the while, and when he had finished he cross-examined him closely, but the inventive genius of the old man was quite equal to the occasion, and, moreover, the story that he told was after all the only plausible explanation of his presence there with his men, with the English weapons and the Maxim.

When he had satisfied himself that the story was at any rate approximately true, he got on to his horse and rode down into the road to see Umzilizi's men and the gun for himself. It didn't occur to him to examine the Maxim very closely, so, without discovering that an essential piece of the mechanism was wanting, he ordered some of the Matabele to drag it about half a mile down the road, and had it placed in a commanding position, after which he gave instructions for ammunition to be carried across to it.

Umzilizi laid down his rifle and walked towards them.

He then had the other gun turned round, for he had now changed his plan and had decided to allow the column to enter the kopjes without opposition, knowing that if he once got it between the two guns and surrounded by his own sharpshooters, nothing less than a miracle could save it.

This done, he told Umzilizi that although he himself trusted them, his men would not as long as they kept their rifle and bandoliers, so these must be given up and stacked in a place he would show him for the night. In the morning they should have them again; meanwhile they could keep their shields and assegais, which would be more useful than the rifles when the Boers had done shooting, and he promised that they should find plenty of work for them before sunrise.



When he had finished he cross-examined him closely.

This order had been long foreseen, for no one who knew the Boers would think for a moment that they would allow natives armed with rifles to go among them, and so Umzilizi had already explained it to his men and told them what to do. The rifles and bandoliers were given up without a murmur, and stacked away in a little hollow among some rocks. The Commandant then ordered Umzilizi to divide his men into two bodies, and post them on the higher slopes of the kopjes about the mouth of the long valley through which the road ran. They were to wait there until the English had passed in, then they were to come down quietly and cut off the retreat northward, while the Boers were doing their work with rifles and Maxims.

This was an unexpected piece of good fortune, and one that the wideawake old Inkosi was not slow to take advantage of. By the time his men were in position the darkness had come down, and man after man slipped away unseen into the night, taking with him fairly exact and complete information as to the number and position of the Boers to the squads under Major Bryan's command. These had meanwhile been closing round nearer and nearer, as the darkness covered their movements more and more completely.

A glance at the accompanying sketch-map will show the positions of the two forces. Major Bryan's squad is marked 1. The Boers were massed on the summits and the slopes of the kopjes commanding the entrance to the gorge from the north-east, fully believing that the only approach that could be made would be from that direction, as the whole country behind them was in their possession. They had further been most careful in stopping any news from going north, and thus, prior to hearing Umzilizi's story, Commandant Potgieter was under the firm impression that the British column, believing the road open to Tuli, would, after defeating the Matabele, as he expected it to do, march unsuspectingly into the road between the kopjes, and allow him to repeat the tragedy of Bronkhurst Spruit at his ease.

But now, if there was any truth at all in the Induna's story matters had taken an infinitely better turn from his point of view.

The British column, defeated and in retreat, would make the easiest and most unsuspecting of victims. The victorious Matabele would drive them into the narrow place of death, the Maxims and rifles would open on them without warning as they poured along the confined roadway. Their animals would stampede and their guns would be useless, the savage impi would crowd in behind them to take their share of slaughter and plunder, and then—well, then, when the British column was completely cut up, the Maxims could be turned on to the Matabele, who would be far too numerous and well armed to make desirable allies, and the power of both British and blacks would be broken at a blow.

It was a "fight" after the Boers' own heart, plenty of

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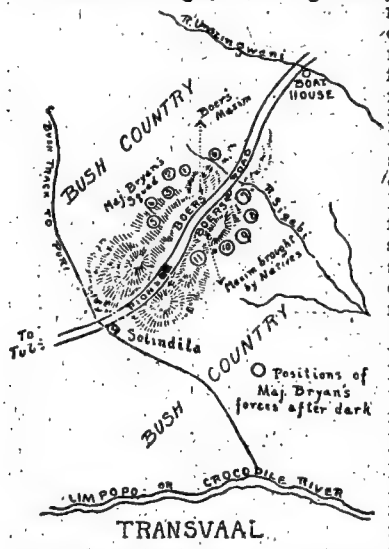
cover, every possible advantage on their side, and a practical certainty of victory. Nothing could be more to their liking or more completely in accordance with their traditions.

A belated aas-vogel,* wheeling heavily above the kopjes, noted nothing different in their aspect, nor did he gain any fore-promise of the feast that was to be in store for him and his kind by morning, so closely and quietly did the Boers lie in waiting for their prey, and so silently and stealthily were their enemies creeping up round them.




But at last, after waiting some four hours for the expected sound of the firing, which by this time ought to be heard in the distance, Commandant Potgieter and Brand Mentjes, his chief lieutenant, began to get impatient, and perhaps a trifle suspicious. What if the old story was a lie, and they were the ambushed instead of the ambush?

It was very dark, and there is nothing that the average Boer hates and fears like darkness. To him the shades of night are still peopled by spooks, and the lore of witches and evil spirits is still part of his creed. Nothing, again, does he hate more than uncertainty. If his enemy will come honestly out into the open veld and the broad daylight so that he can shoot him down without much chance of being hit himself, he is perfectly satisfied, and as brave as a man can be expected to be under the circumstances.

But to lie among those sombre hills and weird, uncanny-looking rocks, through the long still hours of night, with the uncomfortable feeling stealing upon him that someone might be coming from somewhere to do something that he could neither see nor guess at was a very different thing, and it was just upon this that Major Bryan had counted when he made his plans.

Another glance at the sketch-map will show the positions which the eleven squads which he had divided his men into, each under the leadership of three or four whites well practised in bush warfare, had succeeded in gaining unobserved, a little after ten o'clock, and just about the time the Boers were beginning to get very uneasy and sorely puzzled both as to what might be going to happen to them and what they ought to be doing themselves.

They were not, however, to remain much longer in uncertainty. Commandant Potgieter was standing on the little plateau beside the Maxim, looking up the road for the hundredth time through his night glasses, when a hissing, rushing sound broke the silence of the night, and a long curving train of sparks leapt up through the darkness on his left hand.

It stopped in mid-air a hundred feet or so above the kopje and burst with a loud bang.

Then a great globe of blue light fell from it, shedding a clear and ghastly glare for hundreds of yards round. Then, a second or two later, something struck a rock in the little valley up which Umzilizi had been brought. There was a stunning report, followed by the crash of an explosion, and stones and fragments of rock were hurled up into the air and came tumbling back about the ears of the terrified Boers.

To say that they broke cover and ran would be but a mild way of describing the effect of the first rocket. They leapt up out of their concealment and scrambled over the stones, stumbling and rolling over them and each other in a panic-stricken struggle to get somewhere—they didn't exactly know where, but anywhere out of the way of the raining stones.

But long before they reached the road other curves of roaring sparks soared up into the air all round the kopjes. The sky was ablaze with blue globes of fire, explosions burst out in every direction, some in the road, some on the top of the kopjes, and others in the valleys, rooting up stones and rocks, and flinging them far and wide.

The only man who didn't lose his head under the strange terrors of this new form of attack was the Commandant himself. The moment he saw the effect of the first rocket he let out a growling volley of Dutch oaths, and shouted to his men, who were on the point of running away, to help him with the Maxim. He dragged it out and and slewed it round till it commanded the spot where the first rocket had risen from.

Then he squatted on the saddle-seat and let go a torrent of bullets into the bush, and as each rocket soared up he swung the gun round and let drive at the ground it rose from.

"Guess that's sorter wild expenditure of ammunition, Major, if he only knew it. He'd be pretty mad if he could see he's only shooting trees, wouldn't he? Will you let me knock him over now, or shall he waste a few more cartridges?"

"Better let him go on a bit, Bethell; it keeps him occupied, and he isn't hurting anything but the trees. We want those chaps to be in a blue funk before we go in. You'll find they'll be shooting each other soon in sheer panic. This is the first taste they've had of this kind of fighting, though it won't be the last. I hope the other fellows have got all the positions well marked for the second volley."

"Reckon those Dutchmen 'll be thinking the spooks had a hand in this, dropping dynamite on them out of the sky. Great Cæsar's ghost, what a chance at that chap at the gun! Mayn't I let her go, Major? If I don't she'll be going off herself, for sure."

"No, no, Bethell; that won't do. You must wait till we get the second lot of rockets off, and then you can blaze away at anything you can see."

The Major had been carefully adjusting the angle.

This conversation took place between Major Bryan and Trooper Bethell at a spot about four hundred yards away from the one that the first rocket had risen from.

They were standing behind a ridge of rock that crossed the top of an outlying hill which commanded a good view of the plateau on which the Maxim was standing. Beside them was a tripod and rocket-tube ready charged, and while he was speaking the Major had been carefully adjusting the angle at which the rocket was to be fired.

From the head of the rocket there hung by a thin wire about eighteen inches long a packet wrapped in brown

* The South African vulture.

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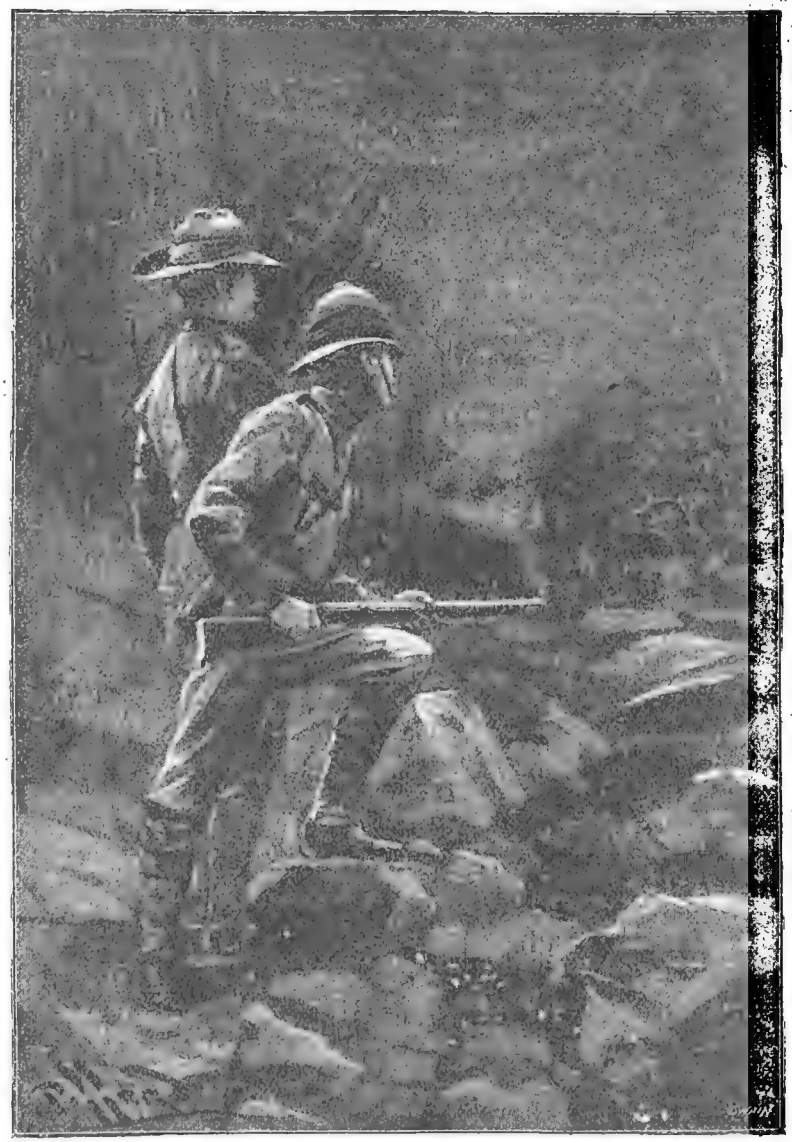
paper, and containing half a pound of dynamite and a little fulminate of mercury. Attached to the touch-paper of the rocket was a long fuse, which would burn for eight or ten minutes. When the tube was adjusted to his liking, the Major struck a carefully-shielded match and lit the end of the fuse, then he clambered over the ridge of rocks, closely followed by Bethell.

They ran about three hundred yards across a little valley that separated the hill from the Boer position, and then they laid down and waited. At the same time ten other rocket tubes had been pointed, and ten other fuses lighted, and if day could have suddenly broken just then the Boers who still remained on the tops of the kopjes might have seen the glint of hundreds of rifle-barrels and thousands of spear-points among the bushes and stones moving up from all sides; but this the darkness hid from them as they stood staring about them in terrified perplexity, or ran hither and thither, shouting to each other in doubt as to who was friend or foe, or trying to catch their horses, which had been stampeded by the glare of the blue lights and the explosion of the dynamite.



"Plumb through the heart by the way he jumped."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### Turning the Tables.

The plan of attack on the kopjes on the Pioneer Road which had been elaborated by Major Bryan and his subordinates in command of the squads was very simple, as all such attacks must, of necessity, be if they are to succeed, but it was none the less effective. Each squad had been provided with two rockets and two charges of dynamite. As soon as Umzilizi's men had escaped from the kopjes under cover of the darkness, and given their information as to the position occupied by the Boers, the first rockets had been placed so as to burst as nearly as possible over their heads, and therefore drop the dynamite which was released by the explosion of the rocket somewhere among them.

This was to be done by the commander of the squad and his lieutenant for the time being. The natives, under the charge of the other white men, had been sent on to make their way slowly and silently up the outsides of the kopjes. It had been foreseen that the Boers would direct their rifle-fire, and probably also their Maxim, on the spots that the rockets rose from, and for this reason the fuses had been employed so that those who fired them might be far enough away by that time.

Then when the fire ceased a native was sent back to bring up the tube, which was to be planted for the discharge of the second rocket in the most convenient position that could be found within fifteen minutes. At the end of that time, or as near as might be, the second discharge took place.

While the fuses were burning and the Boers were disorganised by the panic resulting from the first series of the explosions, the whole strength of the eleven squads closed round and waited till the light shed by the eleven globes of blue fire showed them where to shoot and strike.

Thus it came about that during the few moments that the globes of fire hung suspended in the darkness hundreds of rifles began cracking all round the sides and tops of the kopjes. Many bullets, of course, missed their mark, for the shooting was naturally somewhat hurried.

Indeed, the effect looked for was rather demoralisation than killing, and in this the assailants were by no means disappointed, for while the Boers were running about hither and thither in the brief glare which showed them nothing, and hearing the spatter and splashing of the bullets on the rocks the second shower of dynamite descended, smashing rocks and boulders to fragments, and flinging showers of earth and dust and jagged stones up into the air as though a dozen little volcanoes had broken out among the kopjes.

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But some of the bullets were not fired at random, and among these were Trooper Bethell's. As the glare of the blue lights flamed out he saw a solitary figure standing by the Maxim. The barrel of his Martini-Metford was already pointing in the right direction. When the light came it shifted an inch or so, a stream of pale flame leapt from the muzzle, and the figure by the gun sprang into the air, and dropped out of sight.

"Plumb through the heart, if he had one, by the way he jumped," he said, as he slipped a fresh cartridge into the chamber. "It's as sweet-shooting a weapon this as ever was made, I think. Wonder who he was? Someone, I guess, with an extra pinch of sand in him, for the others have just vamoosed like a lot of rabbits. Say, Major, don't you think we might get the gun now?"

"We'll send a few more bullets into the place, and then I'm with you," said the Major.

They could just see the little plateau, and the two rocks that the gun stood by outlined against a clear bit of sky, so they put in three more rounds each, and then the Major put a whistle to his lips, and blew a long shrill call which was the signal to the rest to close in, and finish with rifle and bayonet and assagai what the rockets and the dynamite had begun. Then they started at the run for the plateau.

When they had covered about half the distance there was a flash from behind a stone about ten yards to their right and a bullet whistled between them as they ran half bent towards the ground. Then they heard the click, click, snap of a Lee-Metford, telling them that another bullet was ready. They both dropped on their faces among the stones. The hidden rifle flashed again, and just as the bullet splashed on a rock within a foot of Major Bryan's head Trooper Bethell's rifle cracked. There was a hoarse shout of pain and the sound of a rifle barrel striking on the stone.

"Pretty smart shot on the flash, that," said Trooper Bethell with pardonable pride. "Guess we shall show these chaps some rather tall shooting before we're through with them."

"Look out, Bethell, there may be more of them there," said the Major as the Yankee got up and went to see the effects of his shot.

"All right, Major, you cover me and shoot on the flash if any of 'em lets go. No, this chap's got his ticket. 'Tain't no return, either. Anyhow, he's limp enough to be pretty harmless. Now I guess we'd better get a wriggle on us or someone'll get that gun before us."

Trooper Bethell's rifle cracked.

Then they started off at a run again and reached the plateau without any further shooting. But as they approached the spot where the Maxim was standing they saw two or three dim figures moving about. The figures stopped instantly and faced round towards them, and a familiar voice, with a decided Cockney accent, sang out:

"Who comes? Dutch or English?"

"Guess we're white, Cocky, anyhow, if that'll suit you. The Major's here, and we'd like to know what you're doing round that pepper-box."

The levelled rifles went down, and Trooper Dempsey, who had given the challenge, saluted and said, ignoring the Yankee's query:

"We've just come up from the road, sir. We met half-a-dozen of the Boers coming away from here in a bit of a hurry, and as they wouldn't stop we made them. They're lying among the stones down yonder. Then we came on and found the gun with these two chaps here lying beside it."

"I reckon that's playing it pretty low down, you fellows," said Trooper Bethell rather disgustedly. "Darn these fool Dutchmen that wanted shooting on the way. If it hadn't been for them I might have had a chance of trading that pepper box for a stripe or so."

"Never mind, *Sergeant* Bethell," said the Major with a laugh. "You shot the man who might have used it. I'll see about the strips if we get through. Now, Corporal Dempsey, what are you doing here without your squad? They haven't run away, have they?"

"No, Major, they're all busy down yonder by the road, and they were enjoying theirselves so nicely in their own sweet way, I thought we might leave them to it for a bit while we came up to see after the gun. We met old Umzilizi as we came across, and he told us that the gun was up here and the commandant chap looking after it. I suppose it's one of these fellows here who seems to have met with an accident."

"Yes, I guess I got in first there," said Bethell, going forward to the gun-carriage and turning over the body of a man who was lying across the saddle. "This is the chap I plugged, so I reckon I'll put him aside for future reference. It was a beauty of a shot. Any darned Dutchman ought to be proud to be cleaned out as neat as that."

When he had lifted the body of Commandant Potgieter, as Umzilizi afterwards told them it was, off the Maxim carriage, the Major turned to Dempsey and said:

"Had you much trouble with the Dutchmen coming across?"

"No, sir. They was all skipping about the rocks like a lot of scared rabbits, and shouting to each other and letting off their rifles at anything that came in their way, and, Lawd, when the niggers got in among them it *was* a circus. Hear 'em going at it down yonder still! Them niggers loves the Dutchmen as much as the Dutchmen loves us.

"When I come through they was getting together a bit and forming up in the road as if they had thought on fighting their way towards Tuli, but I think most of 'em 'll get to Heaven first, if the Lawd 'll have 'em."

"How many do you think there are of them?"

"Couldn't say, sir, to a hundred or two—not in the dark. They was pretty thick among the stones when our chaps came down, but there ain't half as many of 'em now. Them assegais is awful things when you don't know where they're coming from. There might be a matter of two or three hundred of 'em straggling along the road, but our chaps is fair all round 'em now. Got 'em like rats in a pit. But that isn't what I wanted to tell you, sir."

"Well, what's that? Out with it sharp."

"It's this way, sir. The old Kaffir has showed Mac and two other of the boys where that gun is that they gave the Dutchman. They're with it now on a bit of a hill about half a mile down the road. There's plenty of ammunition with it, and they only want the lock to set her going. You see, sir, the Dutchman are right between it and this one now, and I thought——"

"Yes, I see, Dempsey," said the Major, taking the all-important little bit of mechanism out of his pocket. "There you are. Off you go now, as quick as the Lord will let you, and give it to them. Tell Macpherson when he's got it in order to fire three shots to let me know. When I reply let him go ahead. Hinton, you go with Dempsey and find Umzilizi, or some of his fellows, and tell them that all their men are to draw off and get among the rocks the moment the Maxim begins. Quick, now; there isn't a minute to lose."

"Right, sir. Ten minutes 'll do that easy," said Corporal Dempsey as he took the little paper packet and vanished with his chum down the side of the kopje.

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The first thing that Major Bryan did when he was gone was to pull the Maxim out of the position that Commandant Potgieter had put it into and slew it round so that it commanded the inner portion of the road. Just as he did this the moon, which had so far been hidden behind a long bank of clouds that lay along the horizon to the eastward, began to fringe its upper edge with silver, and in the growing light he could see down in the road beneath him great dim masses of figures swaying to and fro and lit up momentarily by spurting flashes of fire.

**The Maxim was pulled round so that it commanded the road.**

He saw that the moment he had hoped for had nearly come. The Boers, panic-stricken by the explosion of the dynamite dropping on them from the skies, and the sudden and stealthy attack of the Matabele from every side at once, had forsaken their cover and made for the road with the obvious intention of fighting their way out of the trap into which they had so unwittingly fallen. This was, in fact, their only chance, for they had no idea how numerous their assailants were, and to have remained in their positions or to have scattered over the kopjes would probably only have meant being hunted down one by one and stabbed or shot before they could have made their way to Tuli.

Minute by minute the light grew stronger, and as he waited for the anxiously-expected signal from Macpherson, Major Bryan saw that they were gradually drawing together in groups along the road, and he saw, too, that the better the light became the better chance they had of effecting their purpose. They were already beginning to shoot fast and straight, and in more than one place the Matabele were wavering and giving way before the well-directed bullets.

He was already on the saddle-seat of the Maxim, with his hands gripping the handles and his thumb on the spring, and Sergeant Bethell had the ribbon all nicely arranged to pass easily out of the box through the breech. If his suspense had lasted a few moments more he would probably have opened fire on his own account, but just as his patience was coming to an end there came out of the dusk towards the south three dull, thudding bangs at intervals of about a second. Almost before the echoes had died away among the hills, the Matabele seemed to melt away into nothingness, vanishing like dusky shadows into the darkness of the rocks and stones.

"I've got you now, gentlemen," the Major muttered through his clenched teeth. "I hope some of you remember Bronkhurst Spruit."

*(To be continued.)*

BINKS (during heavy rain): "Did you go and ask Mr. Jinks for that umbrella I lent him last night?"

Office Boy: "Yes, sir; he says he is very sorry, but the umbrella is still wet, and he wouldn't like to return it in that condition. He says he will carry it home to-night and dry it by the fire."


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# SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

**We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of Frankfort Moore's "The Impudent Comedian," to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. R. Richardson, 26 Rankeillor Street, Edinburgh. Attempts for this week's prize may deal with ANY SUBJECT and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, April 9th. Post-cards only, please.**

## No Tail.

Two gentlemen met at a hotel, and, of course, started on the inevitable topic—the war.

In the course of the conversation Lord Roberts's name was mentioned.

One of the gentlemen, appearing engrossed at this, was asked by his friend what he was thinking of so deeply.

"Oh," he said, "can you tell me why Lord Roberts is like a two-headed shilling?"

After many attempts to solve this conundrum, the other gave it up.

"Well," said the questioner, with a twinkle in his eye, "because he is a Bob that can't turn tail."

R. R.

## Commandeered.

Some army reserve men were being entertained at a farewell supper by their fellow-workmen.

"Now, boys," said the chairman, after an appropriate speech, "treat what is on the table as you would the Boers."

As the feast ended a reservist was seen putting a bottle of whisky into his pocket.

"What are you doing?" asked the chairman.

"Well," replied the reservist, "you told us to treat the supper as we would the Boers, and you know what we don't kill we take prisoners."

A. C.

## Something Nice.

A gentleman heard that a young girl—whose mother was in poor circumstances—was recovering from a dangerous illness. Forthwith he went to a fruiterer's, and secured some choice bunches of hot-house grapes at about 7s. or 8s. a pound.

He carried them, not without some self-satisfaction to the house of the invalid, and left them with her mother, who received them in a dubious kind of manner that did not evince, as he thought, much gratitude.

This did not trouble him greatly, however, but the next day when he called he received a blow which almost made him resolve never again to be generous to strangers.

"How did your daughter like the grapes?" he said to the grim and undemonstrative matron.

"Oh, pretty well," was the reluctant reply.

"Did she eat them all?" was the next query.

"Yes, she got away with them," was the reply. "She is a good deal like me—she is very fond of tinned fruits."

H. K. P.

## Fighting Fair.

During some volunteer manœuvres near York, last season, two men got separated from the rest of the company, and, in order to avoid capture, took refuge in a garden.

Presently, however, they saw a detachment of the "enemy" coming towards them under the command of a young lieutenant.

But this was to be no bloodless victory for the young officer, for out of an adjoining cottage marched a sturdy old Yorkshirewoman armed with a broom, which she swung threateningly about her as she shouted:

"Wad yah shoot 'em? Ah'll see whether you'll shoot 'em or not." Then she glanced scornfully around and added: "Why, there's more than twenty to one. Can't ye fight fair?"

W. L.

## Wanted—a Jug.

A message was brought the other day to a gentleman just as he had finished dinner, and the messenger—an Irishman—was invited to "take something." Pat expressed his willingness to "take a drop of what his honour was having," and a liqueur-glass with Chartreuse was accordingly handed to him.

"And how is it made?" inquired Pat, after sipping with approval.

"I cannot tell you that," was the reply, "it's a secret compound—made by the monks, you know."

Pat sipped again, and again eyed the glass.

"Well, sir," said he, "if you tould me it was made by the angels I could belave it. Here's long life to the monks, and more power to them; but the divil fly away wid the man that made the glass."

J. K.

## Caught Napping.

"Dear me, John, what a poor memory you have!" said his uncle.

"A poor memory you say?" returned the nephew. "Why, I can repeat sixteen columns of the surnames in the directory after reading them through only once."

"I'll bet you a hamper of champagne that you can't do it."

John sends for a London directory, attentively peruses sixteen columns, and shuts up the book.

"Well?" says the uncle.

"Smith, Smith, etc.," *ad infinitum*, repeated Carl.

And all the eight pages of the directory being taken up with this familiar patronymic, the young man won his bet in fine style.

H. E.

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### "Thrust Two!"

A trooper of the Lancers, who had joined the regiment just previously to its being ordered to the front, was severely injured in the squadron's first engagement.

After recovering, his comrades asked him what he thought of the Boers as fighters.

"Fighters," he said, "they can't fight. Why they don't even know the sword exercise. I gave my man 'guard one,' and the blooming idiot gave me 'thrust two,' and if it had not been for my cocoa tin he would have finished me!" T. M.

### Different Without the Carpet.

"Good gracious, Will, how on earth can you work in a small room like this. Why——"

"Well, it's comfortable enough, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's comfortable, but still I can't understand a man being able to spend his days in the space of a rabbit-hutch."

"No? Well, I manage to do so very conveniently since the carpet was taken away. Then the room seemed to be very small and crowded, but I can see no cause to complain now!" T. P.

### Much Impressed.

Some persons never can make an investment in any article of apparel without finding an excuse for calling everybody's attention to it. Occasionally this proceeding meets with a merited rebuke.

"What do you think of that pair of shoes for 9s. 6d.?" asked a man of this sort, exhibiting his latest purchase to a friend.

"I think there is a good deal of leather for the money," replied his friend, walking round him in a wide circle, and looking at the shoes with profound astonishment. C. H.

### Worse than Needles.

The other evening Mrs. Kennedy was dressed and ready to go to the party at Mrs. Lane's, when Mr. K. came in wearing a beaming smile, and carrying a small package in his hand.

"I have a little surprise for you, my dear," he said; "a lovely present."

"Oh, how nice!"

"Something original, too, my dear—altogether original. It's an ornament for the hair. Just sit down and let me arrange it. Now shut your eyes until I tell you to look in the glass."

"Oh, how kind of you, Charles! I was wishing I had something that would astonish those stuck-up Lanes."

"It'll just paralyse the whole lot," said Kennedy, working away among his wife's tresses. "You remember reading about that countess who is making such a sensation wearing a live beetle?"

"Yes, indeed; is it something alive? How delightful!"

"Well, this beats a beetle hollow. It's just the sweetest little live mouse——"

The impression gained by the neighbours just then was that a keg of gunpowder or something had exploded in the Kennedy mansion; and as that gentleman has since circulated a report that he had cut himself badly by being thrown out of a dog-cart, it is fair to suppose his experiment in jewellery failed. E. A. F.

### The Law of Self-Preservation.

Some time ago a small pleasure yacht sprang a leak just off the coast of Yarmouth, and gradually began to sink. Suddenly a man was seen to dive off into the sea and swim to the shore, dashing in again immediately afterwards, and swimming back to the boat.

Climbing on board he gasped: "Where is my wife?" and on finding where she was managed to take her safely ashore.

A short time afterwards one of the boat's party asked him why on earth he did not take his wife with him to shore in the first instance.

"My dear sir," the philosopher quietly replied, "I was bound to save myself first. Do you think that I could forget the fact that self-preservation is the highest law of Nature?" C. R.

### The Wrong License.

A brawny Swede visited a registrar's office the other day to procure a marriage license, and a couple of clerks to whom he innocently stated his wishes directed him to the department where dog licenses are issued. He approached the license window diffidently, gave his name and address, and asked what the document would cost.

"It will cost you 7s. 6d. a year for every dog you keep," replied the clerk.

"Dog?" echoed the Swede.

"Why, certainly," continued the clerk. "Don't you want a dog license?"

"Val, no," cried the would-be benedict. "Ay kaint afford to buy a dog dees year. Ay want to get only a wife now." M. T. B.

### Found.

Fond Mother: "If that boy of mine has any particular bent, I can't find it."

Guardian: "What experiments have you made to find out?"

Fond Mother: "Very thorough ones. I gave him a toy printing press, a steam-engine, a box of paints, a chest of tools, and a lot of other things carefully selected to find out whether his tastes were literary, mechanical, artistic, commercial, or what, and I know no more than I did before."

Guardian: "What did he do with them?"

Fond Mother: "Smashed them all up."

Guardian: "Ah! I see. He is to be a furniture remover." A. J.

### The Smartest Boy.

A boy of six years, who attends a private school where prizes are given on every sort of provocation, but hitherto had never earnt a prize, came home one afternoon and exhibited proudly one of these rewards of merit.

"Good!" said his mother; "but how did you gain it?"

"I was first in natural history."

"Natural history at your age? How did that happen?"

"Oh, they asked me how many legs a horse had."

"And what did you say?"

"I said five."

"But a horse hasn't five legs, child."

"I know; but all the other boys said six." W. W J.

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# THE GOOD WOMAN'S BIT.

It was the year known as the "Black Forty Seven," so eventful in Irish history, as marking one of its saddest pages by reason of the awful visitation of famine. The poor inhabitants' staple means of subsistence was the favourite "pratie," and with Celtic light-heartedness they were content to live from hand to mouth, with no other resource, solely dependent on the hazards of one crop.

Various warnings from America had come to show that a mysterious blight was at work there. But it was unheeded, for at home the harvest had never promised better.

Alas, within one week the aspect changed, the blight appeared and spread with great rapidity and even the tubers which appeared free from it rotted during the winter months in the pits.

At next harvest the same story was told, and then, alas! began a time, the sadness of which would harrow the most hardened. The poor creatures died by thousands of famine or, fever, and all efforts seemed powerless to relieve a tithe of the suffering.

On a summer's evening in the year we speak of a lady was strolling down one of the terraced walks of the far-famed Dara Manor, in the lovely vale so justly celebrated—though under a different name—by the Irish poet, Gerald Griffin. The scene around her was fairy-like in the extreme—Buddha himself in his guarded youth could not have been more carefully shut off from scenes of sorrow. There seemed no serpent in this paradise, and few could have guessed the scenes of woe that were so close. But alas! the lady knew. Her sweet face expressed deep sadness and anxious thought.

By a sudden impulse she left her sequestered walk and went on towards the village. On the roadside stood a little cabin, with its tumble down thatched roof, its one window, and its primitive chimney. But, alas! no grunt was heard from the family pig, no fugitive hens ran in and out of the doorway. There was the little potato field, but the crop was shrivelled and blackened, and, sitting gazing at it was the saddest sight of all—the cotter and his row of little children, with their wretched, pinched faces, seated on the fence gazing at that miserable plot—the cause of all their misery. They seemed quite stupid, and it went to the heart of the lady—or as her title was, the Countess Duncairn—to see no little begging gesture from the children, no token of the recognition of her presence.

She went into the house. The earthen floor was bare, the remains of a turf fire still smouldered there, but there was no sign of food. A few cracked and empty cups were lying about. There was no bed, nothing to distinguish it as a human habitation. She went up to the man and addressed him.

He did not answer.

She then spoke to the wife in a bright tone, but she only shook her head. All hope, all life seemed to have left them.

Pressing a coin into one of the children's hands she passed on and came to the gate of the parish workhouse. There heartrending scenes were taking place.

A poor widow was before the door, and the kind-hearted mistress of the work-house was herself talking to her and trying to induce her to go in. But when she realised that she would be separated from her children if they entered, she preferred to beg with them. But, alas, others had tried that, and were now compelled to give in and submit to separation. There an old married couple might be seen taking an eternal farewell of each other before being conducted to their separate places of abode—here a whole family were saying good-bye. Too well they knew the over-crowded workhouse and the consequent fever which was rife there would soon send them to a life whose partings are unknown.

The Countess turned whiter and whiter, and wended her steps homewards. It was such scenes as these that had saddened her and brought lines of care upon her brow. The worst of all to her was the terrible fact that she could do so little to relieve all that awful want and suffering. Yes, though a countess, the wife of one who owned broad lands and a lordly mansion, she had little to give.

True it was that these lands were heavily encumbered through the extravagance of ancestors, but being crippled for money that way did not fret her—that was unavoidable. But the Earl, though he doted on his wife, had the idea that she was foolishly lavish except where she herself was concerned. He always had the fear—so fully realised in our day—that the value of landed property would go down, and his descendants left beggars. He thought the people ought to suffer for their improvidence, and be satisfied with what moderate help he could give them without fear of impoverishing his family. The slightest whim for her own personal gratification was gratified almost before it had birth, but on the subject of giving away he was inexorable.

"My dear," he would say, "I give away all I can

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afford in justice to ourselves and those who will come after us, and it is useless to ask me for more. Anything you want for yourself we can afford, and you know you have only to mention it."

And she knew that, and that knowledge was all she had to rely on, but how to utilise it was the problem. She had long ago given away any personal belongings or the value of whatever she could dispose of, but in the wilds of Ireland the latter was a difficult matter, there being only a very primitive pawnbroker's in the nearest town, who had a very rudimentary idea of the value of such things as the Countess Duncairn would be likely to wish to get rid of.

But a bright idea struck my lady at last, and she set to work it out.

Her health at the time was far from strong, and if possible the Earl was more than ever on the watch to gratify every caprice, particularly any fancy connected with her appetite. That evening at dinner she helped herself to the various dishes, but after every course her plate went away with the food untasted. As the Earl noticed her total want of appetite he grew desperately unhappy, and pressed each dish on her attention.

"Do try that entrée, it surely ought to make you eat," or "Taste that soufflet, let it tempt you," and so on, but each time she only shook her head, and said "I don't care for any of the things I see here."

"Is there anything at all you can think of, or have the slightest fancy for?"

"Nothing, nothing," she added, mournfully.

So it went on. Next day her appetite was equally bad, and her husband's spirits grew lower.

"My darling," he remonstrated, "this is not right. You can't live on air, and your health is very precious. Do try and tell me of something."

And so he continued pressing and entreating her, till at last she said:

"There's one thing, but it's an impossibility, I know."

"Impossible!" said he, indignantly, "how could it be?"

But for a long time still she would not tell, till at last she said:

"My old nurse always told me that if one's appetite failed there was one thing would tempt it."

"And that is?—" said he.

"Well," she answered, "it's a little grisley bone in the centre of a leg of mutton, but it's only a tiny thing, and it would take a dozen such to make enough for one person; and that would be ridiculous."

"Not for my wife," returned the Earl, and turning to the butler he desired him to send at once for Mickey Curran, the steward, who shortly afterwards arrived and was ordered in.

"Mickey," said his master, "my lady has taken a fancy for something in particular to eat, and she must have it."

"Begorra she must, me lord. Would it be one o' my missus's chickens? There's only a few left, for sorra an egg we could spare from the poor childer, an' heartbreakin' 'tis to see them starving in the ditches."

His lordship's face fell.

"No, Mickey, it's from my own farm it must come Let six sheep be killed to-night, and the same number every day till further orders."

Mickey's face lengthened and assumed a horrified expression. He looked at his master in a frightened manner, as if he thought he were out of his senses, then gave a side glance at the butler (whose face expressed exactly the same ideas) then at the Countess; but she never raised her eyes.

Depression was expressed in every feature, and even in the very pose of her figure.

"There," said he to himself, "it's she that's gone clane mad. Why it's like the haythen sacrifices of old. But, my lord," he at last got out, "six sheep *every* day?"

"Yes, half a dozen sheep every day; you have heard me quite correctly."

"But your lordship, those at the farm won't last."

"Well aren't there plenty on the mountains? Send men out to-morrow to drive them all in. Only see my orders carried out. You can go."

Mickey speechlessly made his bow, and, with a half-uttered "But, my lord," withdrew.

Next morning the housekeeper came to her mistress to say that an extraordinary mistake had been made, and six sheep sent in for dinner, but the Countess assured her it was no mistake, and explained where the desired bit was to be found to tempt her delicate appetite, and then ordered Mickey to be sent to her.

"Mickey," said she, when he appeared, "there'll be a good deal left after I have had my dinner off the six sheep."

"Begorra, there will, your ladyship, six sheep! Why 'tis a thing unknowns."

"Mickey," she continued, "let the rest be given away daily to those most in want. You know who they are."

Mickey's eyes clouded over, and deep emotion stirred him. Like a flash he understood it all. He knew the master well, and he could enter into the problem the wife had solved.

"God bless you for ever and ever for an angel from Heaven. You'll have the prayers of the poor——"

He could say no more, and hurried from her presence.

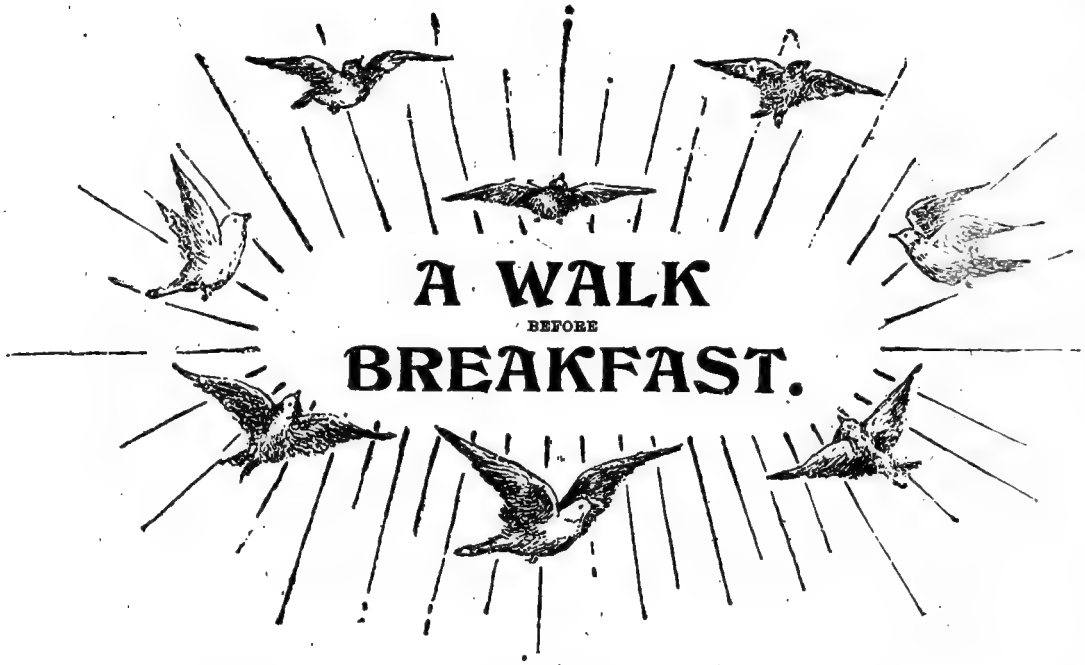
* * * * *

History does not relate whether the Earl ever showed any consciousness of the real cause of his wife's strange fancy, nor how long that fancy lasted. But it is remembered in that part of Ireland, the name of the "Good Woman's Bit" being still applied to the little bone in a leg of mutton answering to the knee-cap in the human frame.

These little bones were collected through the efforts of the faithful Mickey, and handed over to the care of the parish priest, who, when better times enabled the poor people to contribute their willing aid, had the floor of a little side chapel of the Roman Catholic church paved with them.

There they are to this day, and when the grateful peasants kneel on that pavement and offer up their pious petitions, the name of one saint—though not found in the calander—is never forgotten.

T. S.



# A WALK BEFORE BREAKFAST.

He hadn't slept soundly. He rarely slept soundly now.

It wasn't his age, surely, he was only fifty-seven; and it couldn't be his financial affairs, for all his investments were sound and highly remunerative, and his large business was rapidly increasing.

No, he must look for the cause elsewhere.

Perhaps it would be well to consult a doctor.

He rose, and lighting the gas looked at his watch.

It was half-past four. He went to a window that faced the east and raised the sash.

The air came in cool, and fragrant.

Low down on the distant horizon streaks of pale light were beginning to show.

"I'll see this sunrise," said Philip Branstone, the great manufacturer. "I haven't seen one since I was a boy."

He hastily dressed himself and washed his face and hands.

"I'll see it from the outside," he added, and softly creeping down stairs found his hat, and opening the great door descended the stone steps that led to the broad street.

As he faced the east and moved slowly along the finest avenue in this provincial town he sniffed the air and found it good. He even took off his hat and let it cool his head.

"It certainly seems to me that this is better than tossing on that comfortless mattress," he muttered. "Wonder why I never thought of it before."

The pale streaks in the east grew broader, a pink flush rose behind the great factories in the distance, the clouds became hazy. Swiftly the flush deepened, spokes of light were flung upwards, and then came the sun.

Philip Branstone walked slowly onward eagerly watching these magic changes.

"Oh," he said, "that's fine! It's worth the trouble. How many people know anything about it? Precious few. Look at the present audience. One restless, lonely old man, and a night watchman or two. What a shame!"

He came to a cross road and paused to look at his watch.

"Quarter after five," he muttered. "No. I'll not go home. I feel like a runaway boy. I'll stroll down across the fields to the river. I don't believe I've really been along the river side for a dozen years."

He walked at a leisurely gait, breathing in the "tonicy" air and ever and anon turning his gaze on the sun-tinted clouds. His eyes were brighter, and his step more elastic. He seemed to grow younger as he advanced. Labouring men, going to their work through the fields, swinging their dinner baskets, looked round as they passed him.

His was an unusual figure at that early hour. Once he heard a man repeat his name to his companions and they all stared curiously at him as they passed.

As he came within sight of the river a girl came down the road and turned in on the pathway just ahead of him.

She was a girl of perhaps fourteen, rather slender, with a clear olive complexion and thick dark hair. She was neatly dressed, although her shoes were dingy and frayed, and in her hand she carried a basket whose contents were concealed beneath a white paper.

Philip Branstone quickened his steps a little.

"You are an early riser," he said to the girl.

At the moment he was interested in early risers.

"Yes, sir," said the girl, who showed no surprise at his abrupt remark. "I have to rise early to carry my father's breakfast to him. He is a helper at the foundry over there."

She pointed to a long row of dingy buildings not far ahead.

She spoke well and with a lack of constraint that the old man admired.

"Why doesn't your father come home to his breakfast?" he asked.

"He goes to work at midnight and leaves off at noon," she answered.

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"And how far do you come?"

"About a mile and a half."

She gave him a little nod and turned to cross a vacant field that would save her a few steps. Philip watched her for a moment as she sturdily stepped forward.

"A good little woman, and her father should be proud of her. I hope he is."

He sighed softly as he plodded on.

He enjoyed his walk along the river side—the rush of the water being very soothing, and he could not resist kicking in some pebbles as he walked along.

Presently he turned and strolled leisurely towards the iron works. Almost in a moment he came upon the girl of the lunch-basket.

She was sitting on a low pile of boards and close beside sat a working man, bare armed and sinewy; a swarthy man with small, black eyes, and a short black beard. He was eating, with evident enjoyment, the breakfast the girl had brought him. Philip Branstone paused at the picture. It pleased him. He nodded smilingly to the girl, who nodded back, and when the swarthy man looked up he nodded to him, too.

Philip leaned against the pile of timber.

"Your load will be lighter on the way back," he said to the girl.

"Yes," she answered, "father always has a good appetite."

The working man looked up. He nodded gravely to Philip.

"She's a good girl," he slowly said. "Comes a long way."

"Yes," said Philip. "I'm sure she's a very good girl."

The dark man looked round at the object of his praise. There was fondness in his glance.

"Smart girl, too," he said. "Teacher says she's the brightest girl in school."

He said this with some difficulty, but with evident gratification.

"Oh, father!" cried the child, with a swift little blush.

Then the swarthy man's rough voice grew softer.

"She's all I've got," he said.

"I see," said Philip Branstone.

"Her mother, brother, and sister are dead. Only Lena is left to me."

He turned a little and softly stroked the girl's hand.

Something rose in the rich man's throat and a mist swam before his eyes.

The swarthy man smilingly looked his child over from hat to shoes. When he reached the shoes he scowled.

"Bad shoes," he said. "Bad shoes!"

The girl turned to Philip Branstone.

"Father thinks I should wear my best shoes," she explained. "He doesn't know how fast this walk would wear them out."

"Best shoes," echoed the work man; "yes, yes; best shoes."

He looked at Philip Branstone. Then he softly touched the girl's shoulder with a forefinger and struck himself sharply on the forearm and chest.

"She's what I work for," he smilingly said.

"I must go," remarked Philip Branstone hurriedly. He paused and stepped forward. "I would like to shake hands with you," he said to the man, who met the advancing fingers with a warm grasp.

Philip nodded to the girl and strode away.

There was an early tram waiting the signal to start. He jumped in and twenty minutes later opened the front door of his house.

The housekeeper met him in the hall. Her anxious face cleared.

"Glad you have returned, Mr. Branstone," she said. "We were beginning to worry a little over your unusual absence."

"Out for an early stroll, Mrs. Collinson," he said. "Kindly have breakfast ready in half an hour."

He stepped into the library and opened his desk. For a moment he sat in deep thought. Then he rapidly indicted this letter:

"My Dear Nellie,—I find it is quite impossible to hold out any longer. I am growing old and I need you, dear child. The door from which I turned you two long, long years ago is open for you and yours. You are all I have in the world, dear. Without you the house is cold and desolate. For what have I been toiling all these years but for you? Come back to me, daughter, and all will be forgiven and forgotten. Tell your husband that a hearty hand clasp awaits him. Say to him that I confess that I sorely misjudged him.

"Write to me, dear, as soon as you receive this, and tell me when to expect you and Fred.

"Your affectionate father,

"Philip Branstone."

He looked at the letter when he had finished it and shook his head. Then he carefully read it through. Again he showed his disapproval.

After a moment or two he raised the sheet and deliberately tore it to bits of jagged paper and tossed them into the waste basket.

"Pshaw," he smilingly muttered, "that's too slow. I'll hurry down and wire to Nellie that I'm coming for them, and then I'll follow by the first train."

The housekeeper stood in the doorway.

"Breakfast is ready, Mr. Branstone," she announced.

The rich man whirled towards her.

"Mrs. Collinson," he said, "I want you to put Nellie's rooms into the nicest possible order at once."

The housekeeper started.

"Is Miss Nellie coming home, sir?" she eagerly asked.

"Yes," said Philip Branstone, "she's coming home."

W. R. Rose.


# TOWARDS PRETORIA.

**By Julian Ralph.**

***JUST PUBLISHED.*** ***PRICE 6s.***

**BOUND IN KHAKI AND SCARLET.**

**A Record of the War to the Capture of Bloemfontein.**

Among the many gifted correspondents at the seat of war none has made a better name for the brilliance and vividness of his letters than Julian Ralph, of *The Daily Mail*. He has made excellent use of the material gathered on the field of action, and produced this fascinating story of the war.

**AT ALL BOOKSELLERS.**


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# Our Boer Philosopher and Friend.

It was just before the general exodus began. A few of us saw what was about to happen in the Transvaal. We had lived there a few years with our eyes open to what was going on: indeed, it would have been difficult to close our eyes to it, for the Boers did it pretty openly. Guns, ammunition, rifles and ambulance requisites seemed to be the chief imports; then men were being constantly drilled in all kinds of out-of-the-way places. There were not two opinions on the subject. The burghers meant fighting; there was only one nation they could fight, and that was England. When Mr. Secretary Chamberlain formulated his demands, we put up the shutters, sold everything we had, while a price was still obtainable, and set our faces towards the south. There were two besides myself. Jack Fenwick, the under-manager of a mine just outside Pretoria and my partner in the coal trade, George Manby. We agreed to travel together.

A number of our friends came to the station to see us off, and drink our health in the various poisonous concoctions served out at the Pretoria refreshment room.

There was a considerable amount of banter as we took our seats in a first class carriage of the Orange Free State express and a big cheer went up as we steamed out of the station.

The Trunk Line connecting Cape Colony with the Transvaal enters the Free State at Norval's Pont and runs *via* Bloemfontein to Viljoen's Drift on the Vaal River. From Pretoria to the Drift is a run of perhaps a hundred miles. We had exhausted the newspapers, as well as our stock of conversation by the time we reached Viljoen, and Fenwick proposed that we should keep a look out, when we stopped, for a man to make a fourth at whist, our favourite game. We played this in preference to nap, euchre, or casino, the more popular games, because we were not fond of gambling, though we always played for small sums.

As the train drew up, we rushed to the refreshment room more from habit than from want of anything, but somehow one looks singular out there, sitting in a carriage when there is a bar near. There were not many people about; things then, owing to the gloomy outlook, were very slack. We saw no one whom we knew, and, being careful men, were not anxious to play with strangers. However, on our return, we found a seat had been taken by some one, for there was a big carpet bag of an old world pattern deposited on the cushions immediately opposite me. The owner came up a few seconds afterwards. He was a big cadaverous-looking chap who might be a parson or Sunday school superintendent or something of that sort.

"Let's have dummy whist," said Manby, as the train started again. We agreed, and for the next half hour tried to think that it was real sport, but when I had revoked twice and tried to appropriate three tricks belonging to our opponents, we inclined to the belief that dummy whist was not all that had been claimed for it. Up to this point the stranger had maintained a cold reserve that evidently signified no wish to join in the game, but as we laid down the cards, he so far thawed as to inquire whether a fourth would add any interest to the game.

We responded at once. We cut for partners, the stranger falling to me, at which my companions winked significantly, thinking that I had got a bad bargain. However, as it happened, he proved to have a good knowledge of the game and before we had played half an hour, he proved himself an old hand at it. He produced a box of Havanas from his old bag. "I cannot smoke and play," he said. "So suppose we have a yarn. We can resume our play when the cigars are finished." He was no great talker, but he certainly was a good listener and before long he was acquainted with all our affairs. Manby was fool enough to tell him that he had over five hundred pounds in his pocket book. Of course we were not to be outdone, so we let him know that our purses were comfortably lined.

From his old carpet bag he produced a bottle of choice Scotch which he handed round with an invitation to help ourselves, which we did. This seemed to loosen our tongues still more.

"You will pardon advice that is kindly meant, won't you?" he began insinuatingly after a pull at the whisky.

"Certainly," we hastened to say.

"Well, you are young men, I could give each of you twenty years, that must be my excuse for preaching. But do you not consider it very indiscreet to talk of your money to a complete stranger. How do you know but what I may be a robber, there are plenty of them about?"

"Ah, yes, but there are three of us," we answered.

"Yes; and I might have a Mauser revolver handy for emergencies. What could you do against that?"

We looked foolish in our attempts to appear unconcerned.

"I suppose you never thought of buying a weapon with part of your cash."

"N-no!" we murmured.

"Exactly," he went on. "It is the way with you English; you are always so cocksure of your safety. Now suppose we resume our cards," and he began to shuffle, "but in future, take my advice, travel armed, you will live to thank me. Your political views are wonderfully accurate," he continued as he dealt the

cards. "There will be war as sure as nuggets are nuggets. I am a member of the Government myself and can confirm what you say. Chamberlain must give way or be licked. Diamonds are trumps."

"Clubs will be trumps in the game that is about to open," I ventured by way of a joke, though joking is not my strong point.

"Well, if by clubs you mean what has taken their place, the burghers hold a good hand," was his response.

About twenty minutes later the train slowed down and presently stopped. Our acquaintaince got up, opened the window and gazed out into the night.

"We stop a few minutes here to take up water," he remarked. "Suppose we open the door and get a little more air in."

I nodded without looking up, for Manby had just dealt and we were sorting our cards. When I did look up I got a shock. The Boer was standing in the doorway covering us with two business-looking revolvers of the latest pattern.

"My friends, I gave you some advice a short while ago and I hope you appreciated it. So that you may value it at its proper price in the future I will trouble you to obey me with alacrity. Experience has to be bought, and you are going to buy it of me. "You—and he pointed his weapon at me—"put out your purse and all your valuables on this seat," which he indicated with the other revolver.

There was no mistaking the tone of his command. "Make haste," he added, as I looked from one companion to the other. "We shall shoot a lot of you soon. I may anticipate matters if you are not——quick."

I hurriedly laid out my possessions.

"Now you," and he pointed his murderous pistol at Manby, who did not hesitate for a moment. Purses, pocket-books, watches, some odd gold and silver in a few seconds were laid in a heap on the seat.

"Now, about face, turn!" he ordered us. "I mean you to look out of the other window. I will shoot the first man who dares to turn round before I give him permission. Keep perfectly still."

I knew he was stuffing our valuables into his pocket.

"The bag and the cards I leave with you," he went on, "and I believe there is still a little whisky left in the bottle to which you are welcome. But more valuable of all is my last advice to you. Never travel without your Mauser, next to that, a Colt. They do not occupy much room and they enable you to take a more prominent part in any argument that may crop up."

He continued in this strain until the train began to move, then we heard him bang the door, and we ventured to look round. He was gone and with him what valuables we had carried on our persons.

The three of us rushed to the communication to stop the train. It seemed as if the driver would never pull up, but after about a quarter of an hour's delay, the guard came along to whom we all in the same breath began to tell our story.

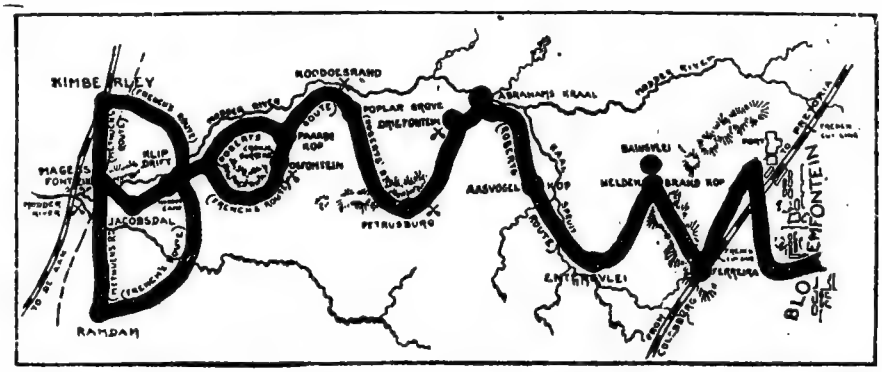
"One at a time, gentlemen," he remarked gruffly.

I acted as spokesman.

"Umph!" he said. "You must report it at the next station."

This was all the satisfaction we ever got, and I heard more unkind language from my two friends on that one journey than I had heard during all the years I had known them.

Athol Forbes.


# How Lord Roberts spells BOVRIL

Careful examination of this Map will show that the route followed by Lord Roberts in his historical march to Kimberley and Bloemfontein has made an indelible imprint of the word Bovril on the face of the Orange Free State.

This extraordinary coincidence is one more proof of the universality of Bovril, which has already figured so conspicuously throughout the South African Campaign.

Whether for the soldier on the battle-field, the patient in the sick-room, the cook in the kitchen, or for those as yet in full health and strength at home,

# BOVRIL IS LIQUID LIFE.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# Our Annual Begging Letter.

## THE OPENING OF THE FRESH AIR FUND.

For eight years I have begged of the charity of my readers. For the ninth year I must beg also. That there is an unfortunate warfare raging at the present moment in South Africa, and that my subscribers to the Fresh Air Fund in the past have already given largely to the various funds for it, will not, I hope, be any cause why our poor little kiddies of the slums should suffer.

Please don't think about the sums you have already paid out in the cause of charity; you have been relieving the distress and suffering all through the winter months, and have had many calls upon you, but I know that you have still a tender corner for the slum children; don't let them suffer more than possible. These little ones, many of whose lives were bitter enough before, have now, perhaps, lost a parent in this terrible war, and we are doubly anxious to lift some of the clouds which gather so black and threatening round them. Surely we should do much for these mites.

I don't mind if the friends who regularly contribute, and whose consciences are therefore free, skip the next paragraph, because the working of this great scheme is well known to them.

Each child gets a day in the country with plenty of good food and drink, at a cost of ninepence. The children are selected from the very poorest districts of London and the provincial towns, irrespective of creed, and as far as we can manage, the little ones who benefit are those who would not otherwise get a holiday. There are no working expenses in connection with the movement, as these are all borne by the Ragged School Union and the proprietors of this paper. The amount subscribed goes direct to those for whom it is intended.

We select towns with a population of over 100,000 inhabitants, appoint a secretary, who, with a committee of gentleman, kindly volunteer to find the most deserving children, and, in fact, arrange everything in connection with the excursions in their particular town. These gentlemen work very hard, and their sole motive is the brightening of the children's lives.

The list of towns and the number of children whom we hope to benefit this summer are:

Aberdeen, 2,000; Birmingham, 5,000; Belfast, 3,000; Blackburn, 2,000; Bristol, 2,500; Bradford, 2,000; Bolton, 2,000; Cardiff, 2,000; Dublin, 2,500; Edinburgh, 2,000; Glasgow, 5,000; Gateshead, 2,000; Hull, 2,000; Leeds, 3,000; Leicester, 2,000; Liverpool, 5,000; London, 38,000; Manchester, 5,000; Newcastle, 2,000; Nottingham, 2,000; Oldham, 2,000; Portsmouth, 2,000; Sheffield, 3,000; Sunderland, 2,000; total, 100,000.

Of course, in order to send this number into the country we must collect during the summer months £4,050. We start the season with £252, being various amounts to hand during the winter months.

Everyone, I am sure, can undertake to pay one child's expenses. Only ninepence! just think of the happiness this will cause one youngster; and you will never miss these few coppers. Of course, we are delighted to acknowledge notes and cheques, but although all may be willing, it is not in the power of us all to give largely. Just give whatever you can, but do, please, send something. Collecting sheets will be forwarded to you on receipt of a post-card. Many collectors last summer tried to outdo their collection of the year before, and so we were able to acknowledge quite large sums from most of them.

I often wish that just for one day I could transfer my readers to one of the outings to witness the children's mad delight. If we remember certain happy events in our lives, surely to these children, many of whom have only this one ray of sunshine in the three hundred and sixty-five, it must indeed be a red-letter day.

You will remember that we fell short of the number anticipated at the beginning of last year, so we want to make a special effort to swell our little army this summer. Just put your shoulders to the wheel, and see if it cannot be managed.

Don't forget, those who cannot send a large donation from their own purse, can write for a collecting list and ask their friends to help. If you really haven't time to worry your friends, post us nine stamps to pay for one child, but please do all you can to further the object we have at heart.

I do not bother readers during the winter months, but from now until the end of September I shall keep on worrying them; ours is a good object, and that must be sufficient excuse.

Collecting sheets and full particulars will be sent on application. £8 2s. pays for a whole party of 200 children with adults to look after them, so if you feel disposed to have your own day, just send along a cheque, and let me know by what name you would like the day known. All amounts to hand will be acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly* each week.

Some idea of what The Fresh Air Fund has done during the past eight years may be gathered from the fact that no less than £22,860 15s. 1d. has been subscribed by our readers, and this magnificent sum of money has provided a day's enjoyment for 573,995 children.

Our readers may well be proud of this record, and I can only hope that the Fund will not fall short of its average during the coming season.

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# £100. GIVEN AWAY

## Pearson's "TALKING" PUZZLE.

THE GREATEST EDUCATIONAL PASTIME OF THE AGE.

*DON'T STOP*

looking at it. Buy one from your newsagent, or send to us for one and

WIN THIS PRIZE

So simple anyone can do it, and all have an equal opportunity.

*PRICE 1/-.* *POST FREE, 1/1½.*

From C. ARTHUR PEARSON Ltd., Henrietta Street, London, W.C.


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# The Brain Gymnasium.

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

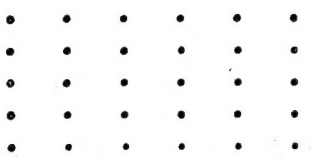
Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by Monday, April 16th, 1900.

## No. 82.

I generally come from Egypt. Divide me in two parts, I become "silent" and "belonging to me."

## No. 83.



Each of the above dots represents a letter, each line a word of six letters; the same letters are used in each line. Fill in the letters and make the five words, the last of which means "effect."

## No. 84.

The centrals of the names of the following, when arranged in their proper order, will give the name of an English General:

A continent.
A city in the United States.
A country in Europe.
A town in Arabia.
A town in South Africa.

## No. 85.

The longest line of asterisks represents the name of an English town, and the eight vertical rows represent complete words. The letters used in the whole are:

A A A A B B D E E E G H I I I M M M
N N N O P P P R R R T T T T T T U.

## No. 86.

Form the name of a town in England from the first and third letters of words signifying:

**Sarcasm; Courteous; To whip; A puzzle.**

## No. 87.

Form a square word by using the equivalents of the following:

**Unhappy; Solitary; One; Measure.**

### RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 58 to 63.

The prize of £2 has been awarded to Mr. M. Read, of "Chesterton," South Croxted Road, West Dulwich, S.E., whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "The Hope of the Family," by Alphonse Daudet, has been sent to each of the following:

F. Culyer, 14 Chalford Road, West Norwood, S.E.
Miss M. Brown, 7 Whitford Road, Higher Tranmere. Birkenhead.
J. M. Child, 46 Wilson Street, Derby.
A. Plentyn, Y Frou, Llangollen.
A. Ward, 10 Clive Road, Portsmouth.
J. W. Johnson, 106 Wistaston Road, Crewe.
Mrs. C. Moran, 31 York Place, Edinburgh.
Miss Ethel Grace, 45 St. George's Place, Knightsbridge, S.W.
J. Day, 79 St. Thomas's Road, Finsbury Park, N.

### SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES

Nos. 64 to 69.

**No. 64.** Scar—sloe—swan—linnet—loaf—bolt; Lacrosse—Lawn-tennis; Football.

**No. 65.** REMBRANDT: Dram—Band—Term—Neat.

**No. 66.** Pare—bare—dare—fare—hare—mare—rare—tare—ware; Pear—bear—dear—fear—hear—ream—rear—tear—wear; Peat—bead—deaf—feat—heat—reap—real—team—weak.

**No. 67.** Lord Roberts—Afghanistan; Flag, sofa, urge, tram, done, gibe, star; Hood, sale, root, soon.

**No. 68.** Jessica—Shylock; JacK—EpiC—SagO—SeaL—IdlY—CasH—AidS

**No. 69.**
TABOO
ARENA
PETER


### SHORT STORIES ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

| | |
|---|---|
| Single column, per inch, per insertion ... ... | £0 10 0 |
| Double " " " ... ... | 1 0 0 |
| Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion ... ... ... ... | 10 0 0 |
| Half-page " " ... ... ... ... | 5 0 0 |
| Quarter-page " " ... ... ... ... | 2 10 0 |
| Eighth-page " " ... ... ... ... | 1 5 0 |
| Front page, whole " ... ... ... ... | 12 10 0 |
| " half ... ... ... ... ... | 6 5 0 |

All spaces above one-eighth of a page are charged at per page rate.
Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.
Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, April **10th**, if intended for the issue on sale April **24th**, and dated April **28th**. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.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# CHIVERS'

## Made from FRESH HOME-GROWN FRUIT.

**THE NEWS:** "Manufactured from *freshly gathered fruit*, amid "fresh and beautiful surroundings."

**HOME NOTES:** "The exquisite cleanliness of the whole "process is most striking."

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THE MOST NUTRITIOUS.

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GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

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ESTABLISHED 1851.

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The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.

FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager*.

## BRACELETS AND LONG NECK-CHAINS

18ct. (stamped) Rolled Gold Curb Chain Padlock Bracelets, safety chain attached, set with three lovely South African Rubies, or Opals, or other stones, 13/6. Similar Bracelet without stones, 9/6; heavier, 12/- Also long Neck-Chains, 18ct. (stamped), for watch or muff-guard, 14/6. All of very latest and most exquisite designs, and guaranteed for fifteen years. Handsome silk velvet case included with each article. Either sent on approval willingly before payment.—MORRIS, 16 HATTON GARDEN, LONDON.

# EGGS

and how to use them.

*See Special Supplement*

## GIVEN AWAY

with this week's

# HOME NOTES.

**The First and Best of Ladies' Papers.**

**ONE PENNY WEEKLY.**

## TOO STOUT

I was for years; by chance I came across a simple home remedy that reduced me from 17st. to 10st. 12lb., and I will willingly send particulars **free** to any sufferer enclosing stamp. Mrs. L. E. FELL, 195 Oxford Street, London W.

## NOSE

MACHINES. LEES RAY, S. S. Dept., South Castle St. Liverpool, is a specialist on Ugly and Red Noses. Send stamp for particulars of his patent scientific Nose Improvers. Red Nose Cure, medically approved, 3/9. Outstanding Ear Machines, 11/6.

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Send me an envelope (stamped and addressed) and I will tell you how to remove all superfluous hair **free of charge.** (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Miss E. V. (Room 3), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

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**For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.**

SHILLING BOTTLES.

## WHY BE FAT?

When a lady, who has discovered a simple means of Self-Cure will be happy to send particulars of same to any sufferer from this distressing complaint. Free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. ADDRESS:

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63 *HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.*

## VARICOCELE.

Men who are weak and suffering from nervous exhaustion, loss of vigour, Varicocele, &c., can be successfully and permanently cured without operation or detention from business by THE DR. COLLINS most improved and rational method medical science has ever yet produced.

Particulars and proofs of successful cures sent free on receipt of address.

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ON MONTHLY PAYMENTS. Enormous stock. New and second-hand. FROM 10s. MONTHLY. Carriage paid. Free wheels and rim brakes. Illustrated Price Lists Post Free.—THE SILVER QUEEN CYCLE CO. Ltd., 221 Tottenham Court Road, London, W.

# ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.**, Sole Proprietors, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

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## DRUNKENNESS

**CURED.** This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 8), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

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***Order it of your Chemist and refuse all substitutes, as they may be injurious.***

Three Tints: Blanche Naturelle, and Rachel. Of all Chemists, Hairdressers, Stores, &c.

**THE LILLIE SYNDICATE,**
Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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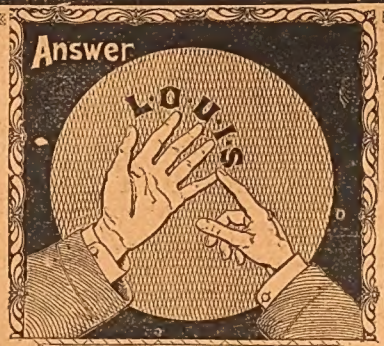


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